1-1-2008

Rethinking women, development and empowerment : toward transnational feminist literacy practices.

Chizu, Sato
University of Massachusetts Amherst

RETHINKING WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT: TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES

A Dissertation Presented

By

CHIZU SATO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 2008

School of Education

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

RETHINKING WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT: TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES

A Dissertation Presented

by

CHIZU SATO

Approved as to style and content by:

Sangeeta Kamat, Chair

Alexandrina Deschamps, Member

Julie Graham, Member

Jacqueline Mosselson, Member

Christine B. McCormick, Dean
School of Education

RETHINKING WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT: TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES

A Dissertation Presented

by

CHIZU SATO

Approved as to style and content by:

Sangeeta Kamat, Chair

Alexandrina Deschamps, Member

Julie Graham, Member

Jacqueline Mosselson, Member

Christine B. McCormick, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

To my mother.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was made possible by the generous support of many people and communities. I am taking a great risk in naming just a few of those here.

I was fortunate to sharpen my perspective with superb academics whose intellects and care continuously push me to challenge my limit. My special thanks go to Sangeeta Kamat who has been my academic adviser since I joined the graduate school in 1998. She introduced me to post-colonial theory. This completely changed the direction of my career. I would not have pursued a doctoral degree in Education without her presence in the School of Education. Since 1999 when I joined the Advanced Graduate Feminist Certificate program Ann Ferguson has helped me to explore feminist theory. The two articles I published while studying with her would have been impossible without her pointed and timely encouragement. She also generously invited me to give birth to my child in her home. I will never forget the first few days of my parenthood at her beautiful place. I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Julie Graham. She strongly influenced my perspective by introducing me to poststructuralist Marxist theory. Her critical and creative work with Kathy Gibson has been an important source of intellectual stimulation. It directed me to think about development in a new way. Alex Deschamps guided me in my teaching. I benefited tremendously from her friendly guidance, creative performance, and careful management skills. My co-exploration of transnational feminist thought with her was indispensable in thinking about the implications of this dissertation in a concrete material context. I thank Jacqi Mosselson for her generous offer to join my committee in the last stage of my dissertation. I also thank Ximena Zúñiga for her assistance in helping me to complete my dissertation proposal.

Many communities helped me intellectually and personally during my graduate studies. One is a community in the Center for International Education and the School of Education at large. I thank especially Mukul and Sujata Acharya, Jen Cannon, Gabriela Delgadillo, Jenny and Cole Genge, Karen Lennon, Sarah and Vachel Miller, Jim Trout and Thelma Belmonte Alacanta for their warm friendship. Delicious meals and friendly conversations by Manashu Gurung, Chris Holme, Makiri Sei and Chad Hoefler always satisfied my appetite. I thank Linda Guthrie and Naoko Ishida for keeping me on track with my paperwork. My special thanks go to three couples: Pan Sariyant and her partner Siggi Gohlke, Tania Mitchell and Aaron Hans, and Andrea and Jacob Ayvazian. They always kept their homes open for my family.

Another community is that of the Women's Studies Program. Through this program, I explored feminist theory and learned to be a teacher and how to offer community service. I thank the students in my classes for teaching me how to be a teacher. With them I practiced my pedagogy and it is due to them that I want to be accountable. There I met a number of fellow graduate students. Kirsten Isgro, Maria Stehle and Bev Weber through our shared interest in transnational feminist thought. We quickly named ourselves "butt-kickers" and met regularly to encourage and critique each other's work over delicious meals. Although the last couple chapters were written without their physical presence, their distant encouragement continuously kicked my butt and helped me to complete my dissertation. I also thank their partners, Tom, Kai and Matt, for sharing their space and food. Another group of graduate students were fellow teaching assistants for the Introduction to Women's Studies course. I especially enjoyed a number of conversations with Viera Lorencova, Michelle Paranto, Mirangela Buggs, Mitch Boucher and Shelly Perdomo which stimulated my teaching and research. The staff

members of the Women's Studies Program, Nancy Patteson, Linda Hillenbrand, and Karen Lederer made their offices my home on campus through their openness. Even though Banu Subramaniam was not on my dissertation committee, she gave me helpful comments and supported my work.

The on campus community of the Association for Economic and Social Analysis (AESA) provided me constant intellectual stimulation. Through Julie Graham, I met other graduate fellows, Ken Byrne, Kenan Erçel, Stephen Healy, Yahya Madra, Joe Rebello, Ceren Özselçuk and Maliha Safri, and two faculty members, Steve Resnick and Rick Wolff. This group of graduate students introduced me to Lacanian psychoanalysis in relation to Marxism. They were so smart and knowledgeable that I always felt inadequate and motivated to learn more.

There are two other communities that offered me generous support. One is a group of people in and from Nepal who helped me to collect the material I used in chapter three. The other was the Feminist Review Trust's PhD Writing Up Scholarship.

Finally, my family provided me the support I needed to finish my dissertation. I thank my child Tyné for his patience. I went back to work on my dissertation after he turned one year old. Almost every afternoon Sheryl, Kendra, Robin, Justina and Kiana took turns to look after him while I worked on my dissertation. My partner Peter provided me with his support in multiple ways. He took more than his share of household work, took care of Ty in the mornings, and read and commented on numerous versions of chapters. I cannot thank him enough in writing. My mother, who raised me along with two younger brothers on her own, deserves my deepest gratitude. Even though she would never say anything, I understand more now how hard she had to work to send me to college and graduate school. To her I dedicate this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

RETHINKING WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT: TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES

SEPTEMBER 2008

CHIZU SATO, B.A., AOYAMA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY

M.Ed., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Sangeeta Kamat

This dissertation develops an overdeterminist transnational feminist approach to discourse analysis — transnational feminist literacy practices — to interrogate current approaches to women and development and women's empowerment in particular. This methodology builds on transnational feminist and post-development approaches in order to challenge the developmentalism that sustains transnational inequalities. However,both transnational feminist and post-development approaches, despite their persistent critique, share with the mainstream developmentalist approach highly essentialized visions of women and economy that make it difficult to develop alternative strategies to transform transnational inequalities. In order to continue a direct challenge to developmentalism, I first reformulate an approach developed by a transnational feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty by drawing on overdeterminist theories, namely, anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class, Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and discourse theory. Through the lens provided by this reformulated approach I then identify economic and power essentialisms and other features that harbor transnational inequalities in two different articulations of women, empowerment and development, examine the mechanisms and consequences of these essentialisms and illuminate possibilities, diverse economies and unconscious desire,

which are not visible within Foucauldian post-development critiques. By re-articulating empowerment with women and development, this dissertation offers a methodology to construct an alternative transnational feminist political imaginary that may function as a nodal point which will create and sustain conditions of existence for communal transnational feminist praxis on multiple scales and in multiple locations. To outline one dimension of its productivity this dissertation concludes with an exploration of its pedagogical implications for a Northern university context.

PREFACE

This dissertation is one moment in my constantly shifting journey in the field of women and development. Before the reader begins engaging in this dissertation I will share some of the reasons why I chose women, development and empowerment as themes. This might help you/me/us to understand a little better what and how I would like to discuss these. What I think is shaped by and shapes the multiple assigned positions I have occupied.

I grew up in a household as a first and only daughter within an economically heterogeneous but ethnically, linguistically and culturally homogeneous community in a suburb next to a mid-sized city in western Japan. After my father passed away in my early teens my mother still treated me differently from my two younger brothers. I knew that it should not be that way. But, I didn't know how to deal with it. The only thing I could do was to imagine how to escape – to go outside, even overseas – because I didn't like the way things were in my immediate community. The first chance to realize my wish was to go to university outside of my hometown. I grabbed that chance without hesitation. While living by myself doing an undergraduate degree at a university in Tokyo I was strongly influenced by two of my professors who shared with me their feminist convictions which they related to my gender perspective. One of them hosted forums on women and development at the United Nation's University which was located in front of my university. Her invitation to attend those forums enabled me to enact a new subjectivity, a young liberal feminist who wanted to "empower" other women in "developing countries."

After I graduated from college I went to a small school in Vermont to study development. I soon realized that what I wanted was not to study development in

classrooms but in the field. I quickly registered for the college semester abroad program that the school offered in Nepal. I chose a college semester abroad because I did not have any connections and I wanted to learn the language and culture while looking for a development project in which I could volunteer. I chose Nepal because there were two countries that the school offered in which I could study development: Thailand and Nepal. Nepal was considered "less developed." I learned Nepali quickly and visited a few Japanese funded development projects before I was invited to work for a community health project collaboratively supported by Japanese governmental and non-governmental organizations. There I worked with rural women and men for a year as a research assistant evaluating adult literacy programs in which participants empowered themselves to improve community health. The people I worked with in the field taught me a great deal. I loved my work at the organization so much, but I felt some limitations volunteering. Cliff Myers, director of the non-formal education section of UNICEF Nepal whom I met through my volunteer work, was a graduate of the Center for International Education (CIE), University of Massachusetts Amherst. He suggested that I go to the graduate school he attended. These are the reasons why I committed myself to development and in particular why I focused on adult literacy education in combination with my previous interests in gender issues. On completing that work I came to Amherst.

For my master's degree, I attempted to theorize the experiences I had with the women I worked as well as within the development institutions I encountered in Nepal. I was so looking forward to working with David Kinsey who was an expert in nonformal adult literacy education, however, he unfortunately passed away due to illness during my first semester. I was quite lucky to have Alan Rogers as a mentor, who was a visiting scholar at the CIE in my second semester. He was a senior adult literacy practitioner in

the Third World (mainly Asia and Africa) as well as a leading proponent of the New Literacy Studies and the Real Literacies approach. He worked hard and very closely to help me to transform my old ways of thinking about adult literacy education during his stay. My understanding of literacy was dramatically changed by my time with him.

While I have benefited a great deal from the folks at CIE, starvation for critical dialogues around gender and other unequal structural issues encouraged me to join the Women's Studies' Advanced Feminist Graduate Certificate Program. Pan Sariyant, whom I got to know quite well through CIE, helped me to make the bridge. My situation in a homogeneous mainstream community in my earlier life did not encourage me to see or to become critical about issues of race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, culture, imperialism, ableness or other 'isms' (with the exception of gender issues) before I left Japan. Thus, I have developed my sensitivities to these issues since my departure from Japan through a process of looking at differences and comparing myself to those differences. In particular, the courses I took on Multicultural Group Dynamics facilitated by Ximena Zúñiga and others and Critical Race Feminist Theory taught by Alex Deschamps started my critical reflection on those issues. A course on Issues in Feminist Research taught by Ann Ferguson and an independent study on Postcolonial and Third World Feminist Thought with Sangeeta Kamat helped me further to develop a link among feminism, post-colonialism, development and adult literacy education.

Based on the path that I had walked, I chose to examine adult literacy education, and in particular, to focus on the New Literacy Studies, through a Third World feminist educator's lens for my master's project. My two advisors for my master's project, Sangeeta Kamat from CIE and Ann Ferguson from Women's Studies, provided me the critical support that I needed to theorize a Third World feminist educator's perspective.

Third World feminist thought was what I had been looking for for a long time as a political base and its pedagogy as a strategy for theorizing adult literacy education in the context of development. In the hope of helping to transform current hegemonic practices in the adult literacy field for/with the women in the Third World I published a good portion of my project in the special issue of *Women's Studies Quarterly* on women and literacy. Those with whom I worked while I was in Nepal were in my mind and guided my master's study.

On continuing my graduate work as a doctoral student my theoretical perspective shifted from Third World to transnational feminisms. This move was stimulated by a leading Third World feminist, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, whose work had an enormous influence on the perspective I developed during my master's study. She enabled me to imagine a feminist praxis generated through creative and committed practices, including those of development in multiple locations, in order to transform processes that subordinate women across borders. During my exploration of feminist theory I encountered poststructuralist feminist theory and was inspired by its anti-humanist and power analytics. I also encountered post-development critiques, which often draw on Foucault's analytics, that challenge the knowledge production of western, capitalist led development. These together helped me to think of women and empowerment in a new way.

Another theory that had an enormous influence on my perspective was anti-essentialist Marxism. Through my friend Gabriela Delgadillo whom I met at CIE I was drawn to the community led by Julie Graham in order to expand my knowledge on globalization. The work by Julie Graham and Kathy Gibson was so creative and persuasive. Plus, their poststructuralist Marxist approach made good sense to me and

helped me to make a bridge between my poststructuralist inflected feminist perspective and Marxism. These together pushed me to explore poststructuralist Marxist theory. Most of the students I got to know through Julie were from the Economics Department, committed to class transformation and incredibly articulate. Their anti-essentialist Marxist approach was developed by two of professors in the Economics Department, Steve Resnick and Rick Wolff. These forces pushed me to take courses with Steve and Rick which helped me deepen my understanding of Marxism.

Julie and her students not only introduced me to anti-essentialist Marxism but also to Lacanian psychoanalysis in relation to Marxism. The fellow graduate students who were committed to class transformation were so fascinated by this theoretical framework and their passion motivated me to explore in this theory. Its critique of power essentialism in Foucauldian analyses enabled me to identify limits within existing transnational feminist as well as post-development thought.

These as well as the unstable situation in Nepal due partly to Maoist insurgency and the government moving back to monarchy after the massacre of the royal family in 2001 made me to decide on my focus on for my dissertation. I chose to rethink women's empowerment in the context of development through a transnational feminist perspective informed by Gibson-Graham's critique of capitalocentrism and a Lacanian critique of power essentialism. Also, my continuous interest in pedagogy, which was expanded by my practice as a teaching assistant for the large introductory course in Women's Studies and a senior capstone course, enabled me to explore the implications of the approach I theorized in this dissertation.

Looking back at my past enables me to see the path by which I have arrived at what now interests me. I hope that this study will stimulate some interest in expanding a

transnational feminist praxis that transforms processes which subordinate all women and men.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS v

ABSTRACT viii

PREFACE x

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION 1

Problematizing Women, Empowerment and Development 1

Theorizing a Transnational Feminist Methodology 6

Two Sets of Issues 15
First Set of Issues 16
Second Set of Issues 18

Toward Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices 21

II. TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES: A NEW METHODOLOGY FOR FEMINIST (DEVELOPMENT) STUDIES 23

Introduction 23

Overdetermination 32

Going Through Mohanty 34
Capitalocentrism 35
Power Essentialism 48
Re-reading the Analysis of the Women Lace Makers in Narsapur 57

Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices 71

Transnational Feminist Political Imaginaries 77

III. LITERACY + MICROFINANCE + LEGAL RIGHTS = WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?: BEYOND THE MAKING OF CITIZENS OF "A DEAD END WORLD" 81

Introduction 81

Methodology 84

Brief Background Contexts 90

Technologies of Development 101

New Developmentality 119

Opening Up Possibilities Via Anti-Essentialist Marxian Theory of Class 124

Conclusion 133

IV. READING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT VIA MICROFINANCE THROUGH LACAN'S FOUR DISCOURSES 136

Introduction 136

Lacan's Four Discourses and Basic Concepts 141
The Basic Formula of Discourse 141
The Master's Discourse 143
The University Discourse 151
The Hysteric's Discourse 152
The Analyst's Discourse 154

Reading Women's Empowerment via Microfinance Through Lacan's Four Discourses 155
The Master's Discourse: Discourse of Inclusion via Microfinance 155
The University Discourse: Development via Microfinance as Modern Pedagogical Mechanisms 164
The Hysteric's Discourse: The Truth of Governmentalization 173
The Analyst's Discourse 177

Preliminary Thoughts On A New Approach to Post-Development 186

V. CONCLUSION: TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES 190

Introduction 190

Mohanty's Feminist Solidarity Model and Its Discontents 191

Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices 196

Syllabus: Rethinking Women, Development and Empowerment 200
Course Description 200
Course Objectives 201
Course Topics & Readings 201
Requirements 210
Required Text 214
Course Calendar 214

Conclusion: Future Directions 221

REFERENCES 224

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Problematizing Women, Empowerment and Development

Are women in the global South empowering themselves through the empowerment approaches now deployed by many development organizations? Yes!, according to the mainstream development discourse: insofar as these women come to act as rational economic agents and active political citizens they are empowering themselves. No!, according to the leftist development discourse: insofar as these women are not challenging structural inequalities, such as sexism, casteism and/or imperialism, they are not empowering themselves. While these contesting assertions agree that women are to be agents and that literacy, microfinance, and/or legal advocacy are good strategies for empowerment, they clearly differ on one question: whether an effect of empowerment should be to enable women to recognize and challenge what Spivak (1998) has called Development (with capital D) where that is understood as "the civilizing mission (*la mission civilisatrice*) of the new imperialism" (p. 331). That is, the leftist development discourse aims to challenge Development whereas the mainstream development discourse has no such objective. Despite its critical posture the leftist development discourse, including the post-development discourse,[1] shares with its object of critique essentialized visions of women, literacy, economy and/or citizenship which surround the privileged signifier empowerment with their counterparts. These shared essentialisms provide conditions of

[1] The post-development approach, which is often influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, challenges developmentalism: the recognition of development as a teleological progress of capitalist industrialization exemplified by the presumably developed First World. It critiques the very foundation of developmentalist knowledge production and its object is not to improve but to block this pernicious "development."

existence for Development. How the signifier empowerment is articulated with other signifiers, such as women, literacy, economy and/or citizenship, needs critical investigation if we are to be able to recognize let alone effectively propose and deploy a non-exploitative, communal mode of development, one that may effectively challenge Development.

The term empowerment has long been central in political debates within development. The term gained prominence in the mid 1980s as a result of the work of feminist activists and groups from/in the global South. Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, known as DAWN, can be recognized as a representative driving force behind this inscription.[2] One intent of this and similar groups was to empower themselves and other poor women in the global South in order to recognize and challenge intersecting multiple oppressions associated with patriarchy, caste and actions such as the structural adjustment programs sponsored by donors like the World Bank and IMF (G. Sen & Grown, 1987). By way of another well-cited example, Batliwala (1994) defined empowerment as "both a process and the result of that process" of "challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power" (p. 130) . She emphasized that women must first recognize masculine ideologies that perpetuate their oppressions. One clear similarity between DAWN and Batliwala in the way they conceive of empowerment is that both not only call for a micro-level, individual transformation but also for an ideological, structural level transformation. These groups

[2] The work done by Caroline Moser (1993), who was at the time a senior urban social policy specialist at the World Bank, could be understood to have acknowledged thus consolidated DAWN's contribution to creation of what she called an "empowerment approach" within the mainstream women and development discourse and, to some extent, the mainstream development discourse.

often used women's literacy and/or education as a means to empower themselves and other women in the global South. Education in this context is understood as "consciousness raising"—"a process of learning that leads to a new consciousness, self-worth, societal, and gender analysis, and access to skills and information" without having the directions imposed by external forces (Batliwala, 1994, p. 136).

In this initial moment, the signifier empowerment became what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have called a *nodal point*.[3] It was temporarily articulated with other signifiers, such as Third World, women, literacy and economy, in a manner that temporarily stabilized the flux of these and other signifiers within an apparatus such as that of development. For example, Third World women who empowered themselves through literacy education or consciousness raising were challenging intersecting oppressions including those of patriarchy, caste and an exploitative economic system. In other words, one of the main features of this initial inscription of empowerment was to enable women to exercise their agency to challenge the Development that these and other processes combined to produce.

Like all articulations, this initial inscription was the product of specific ideological and political hegemonic struggles. These, of course, have shifted. Today, as partly overdetermined by the mounting critiques of structural adjustment programs and their negative consequences for women (Benería, 1992; Escobar, 1995, especially chapter five; G. Sen & Grown, 1987; Sparr, 1994), the entrenchment both of imperialisms and Western liberal feminist thought in development discourse, empowerment is very

---

[3] Laclau and Mouffe (1985), borrowing Lacan's concept of *points de capiton*, have defined *nodal points* as "the privileged discursive points" of *partial* fixation of meaning (p. 112). With "partial fixation," they acknowledged "the impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning" in the field of discursivity. I will discuss this notion in the next section.

differently articulated. The manner in which the award-winning Women's Empowerment Program, funded by USAID/Nepal,[4] defined empowerment stands out as an exemplary articulation of empowerment in the current mainstream development discourse. As used, empowerment was articulated with familiar signifiers, such as women and microcredit or microfinance,[5] but also with the older signifier of literacy and a relatively new signifier of citizenship in specific ways. Empowerment was defined as "the ability of women to make choices to improve their well-being and that of their families and communities" (USAID/Nepal, n.d.a). Women's literacy, economic participation and legal advocacy were identified as the main strategies.

A close reading of the official documents of WEP reveals that empowerment in this case was radically different from its initial articulation by the Third World feminists in the 1980s. This empowerment involves enabling irrational poor Third World women who were thought not to know how to make choices to improve their own well being and that of their families and communities to calculate their economic interests in the market rationally and to exercise rights given by the state as citizens through acquiring literacy skills. In this specific articulation, empowered women were conceived of as capable of making decisions within the framework set by Development and independent from their other embedded social relationships and there was no mention of structural inequalities. Most importantly, a critical aspect of the initial meaning of empowerment, the direct challenging of a Development that supported structural inequalities, which was of central

---

[4] I will discuss the Women's Empowerment Program as a case study in detail in chapter three.

[5] The most popular approach to women's empowerment is the microcredit only approach or "minimalist" microcredit approach, which has been heavily critiqued. See Fernando (1997), Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996), Kabeer (2001), Rahman (1999), and Rankin (2001) for well-cited examples.

importance to the Third World feminists, has been eliminated from its current articulation in the discourse of the development organizations. Here, women's education, literacy training, microfinance and legal advocacy were used as instruments to bring about outcomes that were pre-determined by Development to constitute the state of being empowered.

Left leaning scholars have been critiquing this mainstream approach to women's empowerment. The major critique can be summarized as arguing that this empowerment extended patriarchy, casteism, and/or neoliberalism (Brigg, 2001a; Fernando, 1997; Rahman, 1999; Rankin, 2001). Although these left leaning scholars have made productive critiques of the mainstream approach to women's empowerment, which I do not intend to minimize, they also often reproduced in their own work some of its essentialisms. For example, these leftist discussions, including those informed by post-development, tend to see the economy in the context of capitalist class processes, and other class processes, be they feudal, slave, ancient or communal, are either overlooked or their significance is minimized (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001). A poststructuralist Marxist feminist J. K. Gibson-Graham (1996) has identified this economic essentialism as *capitalocentrism* and defines it as follows:

> other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism: as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement of capitalism; as existing in capitalism's space or orbit. (p. 6)

By way of another example, in order to challenge the mainstream discourses that romanticize women's agency, left leaning post-development critics and well intentioned feminists, in their own ways, have presented an essentialized, Orientalist vision of women as victims of neoliberalism through their under-representation of these women's agency

and their over-emphasis on the mechanisms of domination from above (Brigg, 2001a; Rankin, 2001). In reproducing these essentialist representations of economy and of women, left leaning development critics retained a good portion of the theoretical terrain proposed by the very development they critique.

Further, structural inequalities, which the Third World feminists who inscribed empowerment in development discourse originally challenged, are produced and reproduced through, for example, development practices, discourses and institutions, which go beyond national borders. These transnational development processes constitute what Grewal and Kaplan (1994b) have called "scattered hegemonies." Briefly, these hegemonies are those of the interconnected yet scattered economic, political, cultural, and/or legal structures on multiple levels and in multiple locations which collectively delimit the field of legitimate expression for women's capacities while rendering these limits invisible. Left leaning, especially, post-development critics' failures to recognize and challenge economic and power essentialisms and to attend the transnational character of development processes may paradoxically be producing conditions of existence for Development. Further, these failures may be creating a terrain within which it is very difficult to recognize and develop strategies that provide real alternatives to current mainstream approaches.

Theorizing a Transnational Feminist Methodology

This dissertation seeks to expose economic and power essentialisms within not only mainstream but also critical and post-development literatures on women's empowerment and to explore their effects within current debates on women's empowerment by drawing on a transnational feminist methodology. By bringing a transnational feminist methodology into post-development interventions, it aims to extend

their direct challenge to any forms of Development. However, existing transnational feminist methodologies are inadequate as they, themselves, carry forward the same essentialisms found in mainstream and post-development literatures. Thus, this dissertation simultaneously intervenes the field of transnational feminist thought by reformulating its methodology. To do so I elaborate Chandra Talpade Mohanty's approach by drawing on overdeterminist theoretical traditions, namely anti-essentialist Marxian theory of class, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and discourse theory. Since I develop this perspective at length in chapter two, I offer here only a brief justification for my theoretical choice.

Transnational feminist thought[6] makes it possible to imagine a common political struggle across class, racial, sexual and national borders by explicitly recognizing women's agency as formed through complex processes. Within this rapidly growing literature I pay special attention to the contributions of Chandra Talpade Mohanty (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; C. T. Mohanty, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2003). I chose Mohanty for a number of reasons. First, post-development approaches, albeit critical, do not necessarily concern themselves with the production of a category of women even when they examine women's empowerment. Mohanty's feminist perspective enables me to attend to how a category of women, women subjects and objects of empowerment, is produced with critical attention to race, class and other social processes. Second, her approach critically engages post-colonialism, Marxism and feminism which deeply

[6] Among the many possible sources, see Alexander and Mohanty (1997), Ferguson (1998), Grewal and Kaplan (1994b); Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallem (1999), Mohanty (2003), Shohat (1998b), Spivak (Spivak, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2003).

influenced the initial inscription of empowerment by Third World feminists.[7] Firmly grounded on these traditions, her approach neither romanticizes nor under-represents Third World women's agency, thus it makes it possible to expose Orientalism in both the mainstream and post-development approaches. Third, while her earlier critique of feminist development studies has been influential her more recent transnational feminist work is less known in feminist let alone leftist development studies. Her transnational feminist work grew out of a Third World feminism motivated by the urgency of Third World women's day-to-day struggle to challenge prevailing global capitalist domination that traverses national boarders. In order to challenge Development that is produced partly by transnational development processes her approach that enables me to attend transnational connections is crucial. Fourth, she takes up the question of pedagogy in a northern university classroom. She recognizes the work she does with her students as an important transformative strategy through which she can enable conditions within which her transnational feminist project can go forward. All of this makes it important for me to engage her work in order to investigate the production of subordination and empowerment of Third World women in development practices, discourses and institutions that cut across national borders.

Mohanty's political goals, which are shared by other transnational feminist scholars, can be summarized in the following way. Transnational feminist thought seeks to decolonize Eurocentric feminist thought and its representation of Third World women by critically acknowledging these women's agency as knowledge producers. In so doing, it

---

[7] Post-colonialism, Marxism and feminism are also recognized as definitive of transnational feminism by two other prominent transnational feminist scholars, Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (1999).

attempts to reorient feminism to build a *transnational feminist praxis* that links the views and voices of ourselves and those of our counterparts, including women subjects and objects of empowerment, to others' who share partially overlapping perspectives that are the respective products of their different locations in order to counter a global capitalism that utilizes gender, race and other power relations to differentially subordinate women transnationally.

Building on Mohanty's transnational feminist approach I will theorize a methodology, transnational feminist literacy practice by drawing on overdeterminist theoretical traditions. In order to bridge between Mohanty's approach and overdeterminist theories I chose to integrate "transnational literacy" developed by another prominent transnational feminist scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1996, 1997, 1999, 2003). Spivak's transnational literacy not only shares a number of theoretical roots with Mohanty's approach, such as post-colonialism, feminism and Marxism, but also those of the overdeterminist theoretical traditions, such as psychoanalysis.

Spivak's transnational literacy urges us, feminists and/or developers with a transnational consciousness, to bridge the "epistemic discontinuity" between, in this dissertation, the women objects/subjects of the empowerment discourse and us, who are differently affected by "the financialization of the globe" in our respective spheres and locations. Two of the reading strategies for construction of the transnational feminist praxis suggested by this approach are as follows. First, we must "learn to learn from below," from the texts written by the subaltern, "those removed from lines of social mobility" (2003, p. 180), through developing "openness towards the imagined agency of the other" (p. 194). Spivak has argued that those texts written by the subaltern shouldnot be dismissed on the basis of not using the language of "high theory." This approach

requires us to develop reading skills that differentiate the subaltern's particular ways of articulating context-specific agendas for decolonization from non-subaltern practices of "speaking for" the subaltern which risk "fake[ing] collective will from below" (2001, p. 14). Second, while doing the first and this is an example of how her approach is influenced by overdeterminist theories, she advocates that we must simultaneously look at "the allegory of capitalism not in terms of capitalism as the source of authoritative reference but in terms of the constant small failures in and interruptions to its logic, which help to recode it and produce our unity" across national borders (1997, p. 483). Transnational literacy, therefore, motivates an "interruptive" transnational feminist praxis. This praxis explicitly disavows the ideals of liberty, democracy and/or freedom as they exist under capitalism.

An overdeterminist theory, an anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class,[8] is indispensable to reformulate the capitalocentric vision of economy within not only post-development but also transnational feminist thought by recognizing diverse class processes and their mutual contradictions.[9] Their capitalocentric visions and strategies obscure non-capitalist class processes, such as the feudal, slave, independent and communal, in which Third World women subjects of empowerment discourses engage, and it blinds these theorists to processes other than one form of exploitation within their understanding of capitalist class processes. This limited vision complicates their attempts to construct an approach that may challenge exploitative and unjust class processes in a

---

[8] Anti-essentialist Marxism recognizes class not as property or power but as involving processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus (Gibson-Graham *et al.*, 2000, 2001; Resnick & Wolff, 1987).

[9] Capitalocentrism is not specific to Mohanty's transnational feminist approach. Other transnational feminists' approaches, for example Grewal and Kaplan (1994b), are also capitalocentric.

manner consistent with the vision of the Third World feminists who contributed to the initial inscription of empowerment within the development apparatus. We need to challenge not only Eurocentric feminism and global capitalism but also the capitalocentrism that haunts transnational feminists' representation of economy if we are to transform "scattered hegemonies." The capitalocentric vision of economy embedded in transnational feminist and post-development interventions might paradoxically provide conditions of existence for Development by obscuring the scattered hegemonies that I am attempting to render visible and then displace.

In order to develop reading skills that acknowledge economic difference, I propose a non-capitalocentric transnational feminist perspective that draws on overdeterminist theories, one of which is an anti-essentialist Marxian theory of class. It recognizes class as involving processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus(Gibson-Graham et al., 2000, 2001; Resnick & Wolff, 1987).[10] This non-capitalocentric reading of political economy, as a particular approach to discourse analysis, enables us to ask, for example, in what capitalist and non-capitalist class processes Third world women subjects of empowerment engage, whether they produce, appropriate and distribute surplus, if

---

[10] Marx identifies laborers as often performing both *necessary* and *surplus* labor. The former is defined as "the quantity of labor time necessary to produce the consumables customarily required by the producer to keep working" and the latter as "the extra time of labor the direct producer performs beyond the necessary labor" (Resnick & Wolff, 1987, p. 115). The Marxian notion of class defined in terms of surplus counters the other, more popular notions of class, such as actual social groups (e.g., capitalist class and working class in classical Marxist thought) or power relations among people (e.g., women as a class dominated by men in "classical" Marxist feminist thought). The anti-essentialist understanding of class makes it possible to challenge the capitalocentric tendency of mainstream and leftist development and transnational feminist discourses which obscure co-existing noncapitalist class processes, such as feudal, slave, independent and communal, along with those of capitalism and (other than capitalist) exploitation and injustice in existing class processes (Chakrabarti & Cullenberg, 2003; Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001; Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b).

they appropriate surplus, how they distribute their surplus, and what relations this distribution of surplus enables. These questions help us re-articulate the currently dominant class-blind neoliberal conception of empowerment as well as those of capitalocentric post-development and transnational feminist thought with a language of class qua surplus. Through this class as surplus perspective we may be better able to theorize alternative communal modes of transnational feminist (development) practice to transform those scattered hegemonies that sustain Development.

Lacanian psychoanalysis, another overdeterminist theory, enables me to reformulate the power essentialist approaches within both post-development and transnational feminist thought. Both post-development critics and transnational feminists, often drawing on power analytics developed by Michel Foucault and/or Dorothy Smith, tend to conceive of the social in terms of power relations. In addition, transnational feminists whose methodologies are not informed by psychoanalysis deploy the social construction of gender as their entry point for social analysis. Drawing on both power focused analytics and the social construction of gender, social relations of class, gender and race, for example, tend to be understood as on the terms of relations of domination. In this vision there is no outside of power. There is no exteriority whose workings may trouble the operations of power they so powerfully describe. These analyses make invisible, for example, internal psychic struggles of women, even though they are constitutive parts of women's subjectivities, as these fall outside of the relations of power to which their vision is constrained. These and other psychic phenomena are part of the negative space that is invisible to such power essentialist analyses.

From a psychoanalytic perspective this negative domain constantly though unpredictably troubles the positive social relations including the field of the political.

Psychoanalysis recognizes a speaking subject as divided into the conscious and the unconscious. It suggests that what a subject desires in its unconscious can never coincide with its conscious desire, that this unconscious desire can never be articulated in language and that this gap constantly troubles the surface of conscious awareness. It is understood as always internally in conflict with itself. While anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class has its root in Freudian psychoanalytic notion of overdetermination, it does not enable us to examine the negativity, unconscious desire or psychic struggle. Thus, I draw on psychoanalysis to attend to the negativity and its relationships to the social as this attention creates the possibility of a new type of transnational feminist political imaginary.

The last of the overdeterminist theories on which I draw to expand Mohanty's transnational feminist approach is discourse theory derived from the work of Laclau and Mouffe (1985).[11] Laclau and Mouffe have brought a psychoanalytic notion of the negativity into ideological analysis.[12] Among the concepts developed in the discourse theory that I deploy, I discuss the relevance of three: *articulation*, *nodal points*, and *social antagonisms*. Laclau and Mouffe have defined *articulation* as "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice" (p. 105).[13] The result of the articulatory practice is the construction of *nodal*

---

[11] Howarth and Stavrakakis (2000) and Torfing (1999) have elaborated the discourse analysis derived from the work of Laclau and Mouffe.

[12] The anti-essentialist Marxist theory I work with here has some foundations in common with discourse theory. In their own ways, both theories build on the Freudian psychoanalytic notion of overdetermination, which was first brought into the Marxian tradition by Lukács and elaborated by Althusser (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). Both critique classical/official Marxism's class reductionism and economic determinism as well as empiricism and rationalism.

[13] To be sure, by *elements*, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) have meant "any difference that is not discursively articulated" (p. 105) within a *discourse*, that is "the structured totality

points. Elaborating on Althusser's appropriation of a Freudian notion of overdetermination, the fundamental premise of this discourse theory is the impossibility of a definitive fixation of meaning. This theory understands that there can be only partial fixations of meaning through political struggles to construct nodal points and, at the same time, that this fixation is necessary. Thus, this understanding implies that all articulatory practices have an *antagonistic* character. There are always antagonisms at the heart of all articulatory struggles. This theory reminds us that any politics that leaves outantagonisms is doomed to fail insofar as political visions and practices are assembled will constantly and fundamentally be disrupted by the intrusions of antagonisms. While I acknowledge the limits of this discourse theory,[14] it helps me to reformulate Mohanty's capitalocentric and power essentialist transnational feminist approach by articulating it with disparate elements, class qua surplus and the negativity/social antagonism. This reformulation, in turn, helps me to examine the ways in which the discourse of empowerment systematically constitutes the identities of subjects and objects by contingently articulating available and somewhat disparate elements thus constructing a transnational feminist political imaginary as a nodal point each time anew through the constant re-articulation of empowerment with other signifiers within the development apparatus. All of this allows me to expand the boundary of the current critique of Development including those authored within transnational feminist and post-development discourses.[15]

---

resulting from the articulatory practice" (p. 105). Once they appear to be articulated they are called *moments*.

[14] See Sanyal (1996/97) and Özselçuk & Madra (2005) for example.

[15] Some post-development critics, such as Ziai (2004), have drawn on Laclau and Mouffe's notion of radical democracy as a vision of post-development thought.

To sum up, integrating Spivak's transnational literacy, anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class, Lacanian psychoanalysis and the discourse theory derived from Laclau and Mouffe into Mohanty's transnational feminist approach I attempt to theorize an overdeterminist transnational feminist approach to discourse analysis, which I name *transnational feminist literacy practices*. This methodology situates itself within transnational feminist practices that aim to traverse "scattered hegemonies." It recognizes women subjects of empowerment as gaining and expressing agency through their intersecting and at best partially visible formative discourses through class processes which are both diverse and diverge from those of capitalism without losing sight of the dynamics of the negativity. It aims to construct a transnational feminist political imaginary as an alternative nodal point that would form the basis of new development practices through the articulation of available signifiers as well as different subject positions within different locations in the hope of challenging Development through transforming the scattered hegemonies that provide conditions of existence for Development.

Two Sets of Issues

I deploy an overdeterminist transnational feminist methodology I develop in chapter two to expose and wither away issues widely observable not only in the mainstream development discourse but also in a good portion of its critique (e.g., post-development) today. By reformulating the transnational feminist perspective I will intervene in the following two sets of overlapping issues within mainstream and/or critical literature on women's empowerment in chapters three and four.

- Power as domination from above; Orientalism; limited theory of collective subjectivity; and directionality in politics; class blindness/capitalocentrism and class as power

- Power essentialism that conceives of women as articulable in language; illiteracy in dynamics of the negativity; and class blindness/capitalocentrism

In the following section, I will briefly explain the context within which I make interventions with each set of issues in women's empowerment discourses, the literatures I draw on, how and why I elaborate on the transnational feminist perspective and the significance of this study.

First Set of Issues

The first set of issues, which I examine in chapter three, derives from the relationships among women, literacy, microfinance and legal advocacy articulated around the signifier of empowerment by the social practices that surround the USAID funded award-winning Women's Empowerment Program Nepal (hereafter WEP). I chose WEP because it exemplifies the mainstream shift from a welfarist to a neoliberal model of development in representations of women, it is seen as an example of "best practices" within mainstream development discourses, and this type of approach is becoming more common at all levels of the discourse, local, national and international. The literatures I examine are official documents of WEP, such as the primers used in training, newsletters, reports, evaluations, and information on their web sites. I examine these literatures through the lens of *developmentality*. Developmentality is a reformulated transnational feminist approach to discourse analysis that I develop in chapter two by integrating French philosopher Michel Foucault's notions of governmentality (1991) and technologies of the self (1997 [1984]), political theorist William Connolly's notion of becoming (1999) and an anti-essentialist Marxian notion of citizenship theorized by Mouffe (1992).

I use this approach for a number of reasons. First, Foucault's work has been influential among post-development critics since Arturo Escobar's introduction of

Foucault into conversations about development (Escobar, 1984-85). His governmentality and technologies of the self in particular have been deployed in order to examine issues related to women, microfinance and empowerment (Brigg, 2001a; Elyachar, 2002; Lairap-Fonderson, 2002; Rankin, 2001; Triantafillou & Nielsen, 2001). Yet, my transnational feminist inflected reading finds that Third World women's agency is undertheorized in the work of these post-development critics, a characteristic they have in common with scholars of the liberal modernization school. That is, in their challenge of liberal modernization discourses, which ignore the complexity of the contexts in which women's agency is formed, these critics take a bit of an Orientalist perspective. That is, they highlight the mechanisms by which the technologies of domination extend through women subjects of empowerment via microfinance and under-represent these women's agency. In so doing, their critiques construct development as extending capitalist domination and the women subjects of empowerment as dominated in binary relation to each other. Second, although the reformulation of the appropriation of Foucault's governmentality by the post-development critics can be a powerful approach to discourse analysis, by itself it does not provide us with an alternative notion of empowerment. For example, Foucault does not explicitly theorize the collectivity of subjects. Here I will deploy Connolly's idea of becoming (1999) to recognize WEP self-help groups as culturally marked *constituencies* that are made each time anew through political movements. Connolly's idea of becoming does not specify its directionality (Radhakrishnan, 2003) and Foucault's power/knowledge, which does provide the framework for the discovery of subordinated knowledges, does not specify their content. In order to overcome these limitations, I will draw on an anti-essentialist Marxian notion of citizenship (Mouffe, 1992) in combination with that of class to specify the content of

one subordinated knowledge — class qua surplus — and offer directionality for alternative politics of empowerment that aims to actively support communal mode of developmentality.

Through this anti-Orientalist and non-capitalocentric notion of developmentality, I will examine the particular modality of power by which women, literacy, economy and citizenship are articulated around empowerment within WEP. On the one hand, this perspective will make visible WEP, as creating a space for women to engage in multiple class processes of which some, if not the majority, could be exploitative. On the other hand, it will enable us to see possibilities of identifying and supporting non-exploitative class processes within existing social relations. In theorizing developmentality, I will attempt to articulate empowerment with the communal class process in a manner that may disrupt the continuously shifting imperialist mode of developmentality or Development without romanticizing communal class processes, that is, without ignoring contradictions and social antagonisms that can be found in any class process.

Second Set of Issues

The second set of issues, which I will take up in chapter four, springs partly from Foucault's fundamental premise that power relations have no outside (1980). While Foucauldian post-development critiques have opened up a certain field of the possible by making visible the mechanisms by which individuals come to govern themselves within power/knowledge relations, the premise that there is no outside of power, power essentialism, seems to have produced the effect of foreclosing other possibilities within post-development thought. This makes it possible for post-development critics to conceive of dynamic subjectivities —for example, of women subjects/objects of empowerment approaches— in terms of the deterministic ways in which they are trapped within the

symbolic order. By way of example, Rankin (2001), who draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality, claimed that her analysis, which examined the connections between political rationality within a particular development apparatus and microcredit as a governmental strategy, reveals "markets themselves as a mechanism of governance that carefully regulates individual behavior" (p. 33). While critically acknowledging that her intervention has produced political effects, which I do not intend to minimize, what concerns me is that individual behavior is conceived of as regulated and thus largely determined by the signifiers of the market mechanism. I invoke a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective to deal with this concern. The approach I use here would not disagree with claims, such as Rankin's, but it would argue that this analysis is limited to that which appears in the symbolic order of development and that this object of analysis is insufficient as it does not allow for the negativity.

In order to highlight possibilities that are not as visible within Foucauldian analyses I will elaborate the transnational feminist perspective that I have developed in chapter two by drawing on the work of French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan. In particular, I have chosen Lacan's four discourses[16] as a particular approach to discourse analysis. Lacan's four discourses: those of the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst, to offer a means by which four key social phenomena, respectively governing,

[16] The Four discourses were first introduced by Lacan in his Seminar XVII (1969-70) in response to the 1968 students' revolts. This seminar was published in French in 1991. The Seminar has recently been translated into English recently (2007). In addition to his seminar I draw on Lacan's discussions of the four discourses scattered in his writings that are translated in English after 1970, mainly (but not limited to) Seminar XX (1998) and Television (1990) as well as those scholars who draw on his four discourses: mainly, Adams (1996), Bracher (1994), Fink (1995, 1999), Grigg (1993), Wajcman (2003), Wright (1999) and Žižek (1998).

educating, protesting and revolutionizing can be articulated (Bracher, 1994).[17] This analytic illuminates four different subject positions in four discourses. The analysis will show that Foucauldian post-development analyses, in which the regime of power is represented as having no outside, only illuminate the visible portions of Lacan's discourses of the Master and the University. That is, the Foucauldian subject appears to be theorized as independent of what Lacan (1981) called *the real*, which is "the impossible" (p. 167) within the realm of the symbolic, which may be approached but "always comes back to the same place" (p. 49).[18] This chapter is an attempt to shed light on this space called the real, a space that has not been considered in the discussions of the subjectivities of women recipients of microfinance activities in the global South let alone in the existing post-development thought.

In order to examine the role of the real in the transnational mechanisms by which subjects of development are produced and Development is produced and maintained by these subjects I look at a range of literatures from speeches by a World Bank president to the accounts of women subjects of economic empowerment via microfinance supported by the Grameen Bank. By theorizing a transnational feminist perspective informed by Lacan's four discourses I will attempt to illuminate possibilities that are not conceivable within Foucauldian analytic. I hope to expand theoretical conversations within the post-

---

[17] According to Fink (1995), the discourses of the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst were not the only discourses that could be imagined. However, he argued that these four discourses "cover a great deal of ground and are extremely useful in examining the main-springs and aims of various discourses" (p. 145).

[18] Copjec (1994), a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist, also has made this point in her critique of Foucauldian power analytics' influence on psychoanalysis in feminist film studies and defines this tendency to conceive of society independent from what Lacan calls the real as historicism: "the reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations of power and knowledge" (p. 6).

development discourse to elaborate a form of empowerment whose articulation within the discourse and practice of development would continuously wither away any form of Development.

Toward Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices

The transnational feminist methodology, transnational feminist literacy practices, developed in this dissertation is inspired partly by the work of Mohanty. She also explicitly discusses her methodology in the context of Northern university classrooms in her writing. Thus, in the final chapter of this dissertation, I explore the pedagogical implications of the transnational feminist perspective that I have theorized in this dissertation in relation to the work done by Mohanty. I examine the pedagogical model she advocated in one of her more recent essays (2003) and discuss points of connection and difference between her pedagogy and the one I propose in this dissertation.

While teaching and learning take place in various contexts, the context in which I situate this exploration is that of a Northern university classroom. To make this exploration concrete I have chosen to develop a syllabus entitled *Rethinking Women, Development and Empowerment* for an upper level undergraduate seminar in a women's studies' classroom. The driving questions that underline this pedagogical exercise are: what would transnational feminist literacy practices offer in conversations on pedagogies within existing transnational feminist thought?; what pedagogical strategies would transnational feminist literacy practices suggest in order to build a *transnational feminist praxis*?; and what notion of empowerment could be produced through co-exploration of various sites of transnational feminist engagement through transnational feminist literacy practices with students? This open-ended pedagogical exercise is part of my on-going exploration of the pedagogical implications of a notion of empowerment for construction

of a transnational feminist imaginary that may serve as an alternative nodal point whose articulation in practice may create and sustain conditions of existence for a non-capitalocentric, communal transnational feminist praxis.

CHAPTER II

TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES: A NEW METHODOLOGY FOR FEMINIST (DEVELOPMENT) STUDIES

Introduction

This chapter develops a transnational feminist methodology, specifically transnational feminist literacy practices, to interrogate current approaches to women and development and women's empowerment in particular. Let me briefly outline the existing approaches and what these entail. First, the developmentalist approach, which is still dominant, looks straight outward, or perhaps more accurately, downward. It focuses solely on how to empower Third World women in the Third World. In this approach, teachers and development experts trained in/from the First World are supposed to posses the knowledge required to empower Third World women and students are expected to learn that knowledge. Implicit in this approach is a teleological progress toward neoliberal capitalist industrialization led by presumably more developed First World subjects. In this approach women are to empower themselves without either infrastructural support or a social safety net (discussed in depth in chapter three) and their empowerment is to advance capitalist development. Therefore, this approach sustains a Development that is "the civilizing mission (*la mission civilisatrice*) of the new imperialism" (Spivak, 1998, p. 331). This approach has been extensively critiqued by not only leftist-leaning critics but also people who take this approach. Second, the critical development approach, as the name indicates, is critical of the developmentalist vision. It critiques the developmentalist approach for its silences (e.g., gender, culture, and structures). It corrects the developmentalist approach without challenging its fundamental premise. As a result, this approach provides conditions of existence for Development. Third, the post-development

approach, which is often influenced by Michel Foucault's analytics, challenges the very foundation of developmentalist knowledge production. It critiques not to improve but to obstruct developmentalism or Development. It analyses the production of, for example, empowering Third World women in particular development practices, discourses and institutions often in relation to the First World. However, the post-development approach misses complex class processes (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001) and, betraying its debt to Foucauldian analytics, it focuses on power relations, understood as relations of domination, that make it difficult to recognize the agency of those who are constructed as subordinate. Further, it has a tendency to move away from development and often leaves students and practitioners in despair without offering analytical and practical tools to engage in development differently. The transnational feminist approach developed in this dissertation is situated within the post-development tradition insofar as they share basic premises. It, however, offers a critique of the knowledge production process fundamental to the developmentalist vision that expands the potential contribution of the post-development approach. How?

The transnational feminist analysis I present here critically examines complex economic, political, cultural and other processes that cut across and go beyond the national borders that produce the category of women transnationally. The transnational feminist approach theorized here is inspired by Chandra Talpade Mohanty's interventions (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997; C. T. Mohanty, 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1997, 2003). Mohanty has explicitly recognized the agency of the women objects/subjects of empowerment discourses and has drawn on historical materialism to examine class and economy. Contrary to liberal global feminists, who tend to overemphasize commonalities of gender subordination at the expense of obscuring differences, Mohanty's work

demonstrates the urgent need to theorize a racialized gender conscious anti-capitalist transnational feminist politics. Her work grew out of Third World feminism motivated by the urgency of Third World women's day-to-day struggle to challenge prevailing global capitalist domination, an imperialism that traverses national borders. It is anchored in Third World feminism and draws on historical materialism, post-positivist realist epistemology[1] and the analytics of power developed by Michel Foucault and Dorothy Smith for its methodology. As an anti-racist, anti-capitalist feminist, her analysis has focused on the power relations through which the category of Third World women is produced relationally in a given historical context across national borders. Enabled by a historical materialist perspective, her analysis turns our attention to the production of gendered and racialized capitalist exploitation and to the domination of women in the most marginalized communities: a persistence that is repressed in bourgeois social analyses. She has passionately identified her project to be "to decolonize knowledge and to practice anticapitalist critique" (2003, p. 7) in order to construct a transnational feminist alliance among women across differences against global capitalism that utilizes gender, race and other power relations. All of this makes it important to engage her work in order to investigate the production of subordination and empowerment of Third World women in development practices, discourses and institutions.

Albeit inspiring, there are some essentialisms in Mohanty's approach that make it relatively easy to envision but difficult to actually construct the alliances for which she has

[1] Satya Mohanty (2000) has presented postpositivist realist epistemology as an alternative to both foundationalism and postmodern relativism. It takes issues with the latter insofar as it conceives of the concept of identity as fragmented, contradictory and changing, and argues that postmodern relativism makes it irrelevant to analysis. In order to avoid being relativist it insists that identity is also grounded in concrete material "facts" (such as gender, race, and class relations), social location and experience.

so passionately advocated. This might sound odd since at least one commonality that her transnational feminist methodology is known to have with those of postmodernism is her persistent critique of essentialisms. Her continuous critique, informed by Third World feminist traditions, of the production of the pre-given, unitary category of Third World women is one representative example (1991b). However, from a perspective informed by anti-essentialist Marxist and discourse theories, Mohanty's transnational feminist approach shares with her counterparts and post-development critics the tendency to present a monolithic understanding of capitalism within which they place a special focus on relations of domination. What does this mean?

In Mohanty's more recent work global capitalism has become a special, if not central, object of critique. Mohanty (2003) has presented the experience of a capitalist form of exploitation as providing a basis for producing potential common interests and solidarities among women across differences. In her analysis it is a "global capitalism" in opposition to which women gain political agency. Mohanty claimed "to draw attention to the specificities of global capitalism and to name and demystify its effects in everyday life" (p. 9). However, her intervention makes it impossible to see the proliferation of economic conditions within which women are constituted. This obscures the necessarily local manifestations of capitalist and non-capitalist economies and blurs their effects and the contextually shaped responses of women. One discursive effect of this intervention, contrary to her commitment to decolonization, is the production of an alternative and perhaps differently colonizing economic knowledge.

Anti-essentialist Marxist feminist geographer J. K. Gibson-Graham's intervention suggests how we might decolonize the economic knowledge whose discursive colonization is reproduced in the work of Mohanty and others. Much as Mohanty's earlier

interventions destabilized the received monolithic category of Third World women, Gibson-Graham's intervention subverts the received and unfortunately equally monolithic economic category of capitalism. Gibson-Graham (1996) has named this tendency to represent economy as equal to monolithically conceived capitalism *capitalocentrism*:

> other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism: as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement of capitalism; as existing in capitalism's space or orbit. (p. 6)

Mohanty has quarreled with the production of an essentialized category of Third World women. What transnational feminist politics would be imaginable if we also quarrel with the production of an essentialized category of economy, namely capitalism? If transnational feminists are to take the specificities and differences of women seriously, how women are constituted through different economic processes must also be critically engaged.

Second, Mohanty's methodology puts a special focus on relations of power as domination. In her analysis, class, gender, race and other social relations are part of power relations. Her assessment of economic process of exploitation and political process of domination are built on this same model. From an anti-essentialist Marxist perspective, this power essentialism makes it difficult to differentiate between and within these discrete but interconnected processes. While the operations of power within these processes do sometimes correspond, it is not always so. For example, those who are politically subordinated, let us say, poor Third World women who engage in homework, could be appropriating the surplus of their own labor within a communal class process. On the terms of an anti-essentialist Marxist analysis, these women are not being exploited within

capitalist class processes. Their relationship to the surplus of their labor provides an organizing platform that Mohanty cannot see from which they can be engaged in transformative processes. When we fail to distinguish these two processes we obscure women's economic agency.

Power essentialism is also problematic from a perspective informed by Lacanian psychoanalysis as it excludes radical contingency from the social field. Joan Copjec (1994), a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist, in her critique of Foucauldian power analytics' influence on psychoanalysis in feminist film studies, has defined this power essentialism as historicism: "the reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations of power and knowledge" (p. 6).[2] Psychoanalysis quarrels with historicism as it erases the most fundamental psychoanalytic contribution, the negativity of the social, radical contingency, or "antagonism" (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), which falls outside of power relations. When the negativity is excluded from analysis, gender, race and other processes are thought of as intersecting, being pushed and pulled, around a closed totality of capitalism within networks of power that can never be escaped. A politics which does not take the negativity into account is thought to be doomed to fail for that which is excluded from analysis, the intrusions of the negativity, unpredictably interfere in the prescribed articulatory political practices. For example, diverse class processes which fall outside of Mohanty's capitalocentric transnational feminist thought can be identified as an excess, a surplus, that forms part of the negativity that will constantly trouble Mohanty's political practice. This politics, which suppresses diverse class processes, would be doomed to fail

[2] Copjec (1994) limited her critique on Foucault's "*Discipline and Punish, The History of Sexuality*, and essays and interviews of the mid to late 1970s, when Foucault reversed his position with respect to linguistic and psychoanalytic theory" (p. 4).

insofar as this exclusion makes it impossible to unite a diverse group of women who engage in different class processes. Their interests may be different and perhaps mutually incompatible but this would not be visible from within Mohanty's analytics. What transnational feminist politics would be imaginable if we become literate in the dynamics of the negativity? What kind of resistances and alliances would this recognition enable us to theorize?

In addition to capitalocentrism and power essentialism or historicism, there are issues regarding the concept of "epistemic privilege." In her more recent work Mohanty shifted from advocating for a feminist solidarity among 'Third World women' transnationally to that between Third World women and more privileged women transnationally. However, only Third World women, women, who are from (the most) marginalized communities and who occupy class positions as wage laborers in capitalist relations of production, are granted potential epistemic privilege by her racialized, gender conscious postpositivist realist historical materialist approach. This epistemic privilege stems from these women's experience, understood on the cognitivist model, in their particular social locations: one that potentially enables them to articulate reality more accurately. This means that the alliance between Third World women (i.e. women in and from the most marginalized communities) and more privileged women (i.e. myself, the author, and you, the reader, of this text, development experts and students) are based on the unequal (epistemic) relationship presumed by a theory or theorist. What I am concerned by here is not at all whether equal (epistemic) relations are possible but that we are presented with a theory and theorist who assumes the role ofan all knowing subject who determines who is capable of representing reality more accurately and what counts as accurate. This logically counters a fundamental postpositivist premise: that knowledge

is theoretical laden. What counts as accurate depends on the theory drawn to articulate reality, in this case, Mohanty's racialized gender conscious postpositivist realist historical materialism. Although Mohanty is self-conscious about her social location in her work, she does not recognize this point in her writing.

The transnational feminist approach theorized here grants epistemic privilege neither to less privileged nor to privileged women. Rather, it recognizes such a privilege as discursively given, as not necessarily corresponding to reality or terms that enable teachers, students and experts of development to recognize their co-implication in webs of transnational inequalities, to identify a struggle within these webs as their own, and to take greater responsibility in alliances. This perspective is made possible because the processes which produce women's subordination are recognized to be not centered around global capitalism but "scattered" in diverse practices, discourses and institutions at multiple levels and in multiple locations (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b). The transnational feminist approach theorized here thus enables teachers, students, and experts in development not to move away from their development but to engage in that development differently. As will be demonstrated below, it offers a methodology that motivates diverse female subjects across borders to partially identify themselves with a common transnational feminist political imaginary that challenges processes that produce their/our subordination grounded in our specific respective sites without losing sight of the dynamics of the negativity.

I have two objectives in the remainder of this chapter. First, I expand the boundaries of transnational feminist thought by drawing on the overdeterminist tradition of anti-essentialist Marxist theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis and discourse theory. This allows me to delineate two essentialisms, capitalocentrism and power essentialism or

historicism, in Mohanty's approach. My intent here is not to diminish Mohanty's contribution in any way. Rather, I hope to expand on her intervention and, with that act, the boundaries of the transnational feminist thought. Second, I point to a new methodological direction in feminist development studies broadly and in the study of women's empowerment specifically. The implications of this approach will be explored in the subsequent two chapters.

The remainder of this chapter should be read with some caution. First, the essentialisms attributed here to Mohanty may not exhaust the list of those present in her transnational feminist approach and this possibility does not necessarily further compromise her work. Essentialism, in and of itself, is neither good nor bad (Fuss, 1989). Essentialisms only become a political concern when they obstruct helpful analysis or the ability, in this case, to challenge Development. Within Mohanty's work I limit my intervention to those essentialisms that I believe prevent us from constructing the sort of political imaginary advocated here. Second, this chapter does not deploy the whole theoretical apparatus of anti-essentialist Marxist theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis, or discourse theory. It only offers a glimpse of their theoretical apparatuses sufficient to demonstrate their relevance to our politics. My hope is that others may recognize the value of these analytics and integrate them into their own work. Third, these three analytics are not presented as metalanguages. As with any theoretical apparatus, each is held to illuminate reality in a partial and, hopefully, a politically productive manner. To sum up, this study is an early step in an ongoing theoretical journey that will hopefully gather a community. It is not and should not be thought of as a finished product. My hope is that these tools will help such a community to recognize and continuously to wither away those essentialisms that interfere with our ability to produce the political

imaginaries we advocate for, from, and within our respective locations to challenge Development.

The next section offers an introduction to the ideas of overdetermination that found anti-essentialist Marxist theory, discourse theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis. The subsequent section uses these tools to examine and explore the effects of two sets of essentialisms in Mohanty's methodology. This chapter concludes with some thoughts on a new methodological direction in feminist development studies.

Overdetermination

Overdetermination is a concept appropriated from psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud by French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1970) and elaborated further by post-Althusserians, such as Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff (1987), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985), many theorists associated with AESA school of Marxism[3] and socialist feminism.

Overdetermination informs us that each site and process is overdetermined. It sounds simple, but what does this mean? Minimally, each site and process is "constituted at the intersection of all others, and is thus fundamentally an emptiness, complexly constituted by what it is not, without an enduring core or essence" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxx). Let us unpack this. First, the term *constitution* is crucial. It implies that while each site and process is distinct, it is not independent from any other processes. The existence of one particular process is mutually dependent on all others. All other processes provide conditions of existence for any given process and that process simultaneously

[3] AESA stands for the Association for Economic and Social Analysis. It was started by a small group of graduate students and faculty members at University of Massachusetts Amherst in the late 1970s. Among many activities it engages it publishes a journal entitled *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture and Society.*

provides a condition of existence of all others. Each and every process is concurrently the cause and effect of all others. This means that no one condition can unquestionably be identified as fundamental to the existence of any given site or process. Second, each site and process ultimately lacks the state of complete fixation. Instead, it can be only partially fixed through articulatory practice. Its apparent fixation is contingent on its being spoken of as fixed rather than on any necessary attribute. This lack or negativity generates ongoing flows of overdetermination. Third, any overdetermined site and process is contradictory: it is pushing and pulling and simultaneously being pushed and pulled by all other processes in different and oft-conflicting directions. Fourth, each site or process lacks essence. It is an artifact of flows of overdetermination that are temporarily fixed through loosely coupled articulation. The standpoint informed by overdetermination does not presume the stable existence of the sites or processes it describes. Such an understanding of society, one that rejects all of the grounds required for simple determination, is thoroughly anti-essentialist.

Overdeterminist analysis begins with an entry point: a discursive point through which social analysis beings. For example, anti-essentialist Marxian theory opens with the entry point of class and psychoanalysis opens with that of sexual difference. As with every site and process, an entry points is itself overdetermined. There is nothing essential about this opening point. While discursively privileged and often temporarily fixed, it is not thought to be ontologically privileged. As there can be no ontological basis for the selection of an entry point, they are always necessarily chosen for political reasons. Unlike many traditions that make appeals to standards, such as objectivity, overdeterminist

analytics accept that their intervention is always already partial and partisan. An overdeterminist theory seeks to produce particular social transformations.[4]

Overdeterminist knowledge production is also a process that participates in the field of overdetermination. It necessarily suffers contradictions. Drawing on DeMartino, Gibson-Graham (1996) has openly admitted that "Overdeterminist discourses cannot 'reflect' overdetermination any more than essentialist discourses can correspond to the true state or essential nature of the world" (p. 56). However, overdeterminist approaches differ from those that presume a single or determinant set of essences, as noted by Gibson-Graham, in that it "produces a necessity (in the form of a determinate relationship between events or objects) as an effect of analysis rather than as an initial predication" (p. 56). These approaches do not claim for themselves ontological privilege. They, rather, have specific discursive effects.

Having briefly discussed a concept of overdetermination, the next section examines Mohanty's transnational feminist approach through an overdeterminist perspective.

Going Through Mohanty

This section is divided into three subsections. The first two examine capitalocentrism and power essentialism in Mohanty's conceptualization of society in turn. The third subsection re-reads an oft-cited study on women lace makers in Narsapur, India by Maria Mies (1982) in Mohanty's work (1991a, 1997) in order to illuminate

[4] For example, Chakrabarti and Cullenberg (2003) have claimed that development is conditioned by both "ending exploitation" and "providing fair distribution" (p. 201) in order "to meet the social needs of human society" (p. 221).

processes, practices and discourses that are obscured in Mohanty's capitalocentric and power essentialist approach to society.

Capitalocentrism

Opening with how Mohanty thinks and represents capitalism, in the beginning of an essay Mohanty (1997) has stated that:

> This has been an especially difficult essay to write— perhaps because the almost total saturation of the processes of capitalist domination makes it hard to envision forms of feminist resistance that would make a real difference in the daily lives of poor women workers. (p. 4)

This is an example of how discursive practices, like thinking, produce a concrete material effect. From a postpositivist realist perspective, the difficulty she experiences is cognitive and it is real. A realist would also agree that the difficulty experienced is in part an effect of the way she identifies capitalism, and that the way she identifies capitalism is informed by theory associated with historical materialism. While her work is overdetermined by a myriad of processes, practices and discourses many of which may be invisible to the reader, the influence of historical materialism is significant.[5]

When Mohanty examines economy or class, capitalism is represented as the dominant economic structure. The historical materialism she draws on appears to be orthodox. It conceives of only one type of relation of production corresponding to a particular historical stage of development of forces of production.[6] One mode of

---

[5] See Chakrabarti and Cullenberg (2003) for an anti-essentialist Marxist critique of historical materialism.

[6] While *forces of production* with its emphasis on the material aspects "reflect human beings' encounter with nature in the production process" and "include instruments of production, raw materials, labor power, the skills in the labor force, technology, and so forth" *relations of production* "emphasize (social) relations between people in the production process" and they take a form of class relations "between the direct producers and the nonproducers" (Chakrabarti & Cullenberg, 2003, p. 297-8).

production becomes dominant in a society depending on the way in which relations of production are articulated with forces of production. Today it is capitalism that is considered as the dominant if not only mode of production.[7]

In historical materialism the modes of production (or the economy) are also called the base of society. Capitalism, as the base, produces and articulates a superstructure, which is the political, legal, religious and cultural aspect of society. All other economic and social processes are seen to be produced by and as articulating with capitalism but the reverse does not hold. Framed by this historical materialist compulsion Mohanty (2003) has constructed capitalism as "a foundational principle of social organization" (p. 183).

> … capitalism is a foundational principle of social organization at this time (see Dirlik, 1997). This does not mean that capitalism functions as a "master narrative" or that all forms of domination are reducible to capitalist hierarchies, or that the temporal and spatial effects of capital are the same around the globe. It does mean that at this particular stage of global capitalism, the particularities of its operation (unprecedented deterritorialization, abstraction and concentration of capital, transnationalization of production and mobility through technology, consolidation of supranational corporations that link capital flows globally, etc.) necessitate naming capitalist hegemony and culture as a foundational principle of social life. (p. 183)

Mohanty was careful to name capitalism "a" rather than "the" foundational principle. That said, her use of capitalism corresponds to that of a historical materialism in which the economic relations internal to capitalism is the base, the foundation, of society. This understanding is exemplified in her use of terms, such as "capitalist societies," "capitalist state," "capitalist consumerism," "capitalist citizenship" and "capitalist patriarchies," in her work. She spoke this way to highlight links between

---

[7] Five modes of production were discussed by Marx: primitive communism, slavery, Asiatic (or ancient or independent), feudalism, and capitalism.

capitalism and these superstructural aspects that are mystified in bourgeois social analyses. What concerns me here is that capitalism is used to signify the complex formations that bundle up entire societies, states, citizenships and women's subordination. It is as if there is no outside of capitalism within a given society and state. It is the single or most important organizer in these complex contexts. Mohanty did introduce racialized gender conscious power analytics through which she reformulates the orthodox version of historical materialism that I will discuss in the next subsection. However, her representation of capitalism and its hegemony is framed by an orthodox historical materialist economism.

Mohanty has represented capitalism foremost as domination. I will discuss this identification in the context of power essentialism in the next subsection. For now, in addition to domination, other identities used to represent capitalism are those such as exploitation, imperative of accumulation, and maximization of profit. These identities together constitute capitalism as a demon-like powerful structure expanding all over the globe. As a realist, Mohanty might have recognized these identities not only to be attributed to capitalism by her and her counterpart's discursive acts but also as real. She may accept that the characteristics she attributes to capitalism correspond to the real existence of capitalism.[8] One effect this realist claim is exemplified in the quotation with which I opened this section. How can we avoid this negative effect? How can we engage capitalism and economy at large differently from Mohanty?

Gibson-Graham (1996) has argued that one way to challenge capitalist hegemony and to make room for noncapitalist futures to emerge and to flourish is to deconstruct

[8] Postpositivist realist epistemology concerns only identities of human subjects. So, this analysis here is based on my speculation.

fixed notions of capitalism and to rebuild our understandings of capitalism with multiple, self-contradicting, shifting representations that are always already engaged in and susceptible to change. These strategies are in line with Spivak's transnational literacy which urges us to look at "the allegory of capitalism not in terms of capitalism as the source of authoritative reference but in terms of the constant small failures in and interruptions to its logic, which help to recode it and produce our unity" across national borders (1997, p. 483). Instead of constructing capitalism with honorific identities, let us take these alternative strategies in order to rebuild our understanding of capitalism and with that understanding to produce an alliance across differences through which we can act on noncapitalist futures.

First of all, there are multiple types of capitalists. In addition to the productive or industrial capitalists there are, for example, merchant and money-lending capitalists who are not involved in production. While their acts may enable exploitation, they do not themselves directly exploit. Such differences should not be treated lightly. Large so-called global or transnational capitalist enterprises, while they might also be directly involved in production, also buy goods and services from other enterprises located overseas and thus function more like merchants. In addition, as Ruccio (2003) has argued, even though the purchaser of goods and services is a capitalist enterprise, it does not follow that those goods and services are produced in capitalist relations. They could, for example, be purchased from a producer co-op or from a broker for a large number of self-employed artisans. Mohanty's analysis has obscured these different types of capitalists and that blurring reduces the number of paths for engagement that she can see.

Anti-essentialist Marxists would agree that exploitation, the appropriation of surplus by non-laborers in the form of surplus value, is characteristic of productive

capitalist enterprises. But their analysis would also recognize different forms of exploitation that were specific to their own relations of production. Exploitation in the same class structure, for example, that of capitalism, can be evaluated by the rate of exploitation or appropriation.[9] Also, exploitation in feudal and independent class processes will look different than exploitation in a capitalist class process, for their conditions of existence are different. Having created the possibility, this framework then goes further to examine the specificities of these processes in terms of, for example, what complex and contradictory conditions enable that particular pattern of exploitation. Again, this perspective may yield more nuanced terms for engagement than the rather broad strokes afforded by the analytical terms used by Mohanty.

Stepping within the tradition of historical materialism from which Mohanty's analysis descends, it becomes meaningful to ask how "accurate" is it for example, to say that the imperative of accumulation is essential to capitalism. In volume III of *Capital*, Marx spent considerable time examining how appropriated surplus is *distributed* in multiple directions. A good portion of this surplus is not allocated toward accumulation in support of the desperate effort to secure conditions of existence. Here Marx highlighted differences within capitalist class processes. By way of contemporary example, in the case of Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), an Australian industrial capitalist enterprise, the struggle over the environment and future livelihood of the inhabitants of the region where BHP operated mining activities between the inhabitants and BHP made it possible for the inhabitants, who were thought of as outside of the class processes of BHP, to establish a new position in the distributive class processes of BHP (Gibson-Graham & O'Neill, 2001).

[9] The rate of exploitation or appropriation is calculated by the ratio of surplus to necessary labor.

A capitalist enterprise which distributes surplus for the common good can be distinguished in this analysis from a capitalist enterprise which does not even though both exploit.

The above example also represents the identities of BHP as vulnerable, shifting, and contradictory. This runs counter to the typical presentation of such capitalist firms in texts by authors such as Mohanty who present them as enormously powerful. Exploitation, capital accumulation and maximization of profit are not understood to be essential forces. They are three among many processes that provide conditions of existence for capitalist exploitation. From an overdeterminist perspective, thus, there is no essential identity to capitalism, and identity as process is not thought of as fixed, rather, as temporally articulated through political struggles, contradictory and always susceptible to change. It illuminates contingency rather than necessity.

To be sure, I am not claiming that an anti-essentialist representation of capitalism is truer or more accurate. This is a realist's argument.[10] What constitutes truth or correctness is understood as intra-theoretical (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). What matters are the different implications of theories and the effects they produce— for example, whether it obscures economic differences or opens up possibilities toward a different feminist

---

[10] Overdeterminist epistemology, informed by psychoanalysis and theorized by Louis Althusser (1970) and elaborated further by Resnick and Wolff (1987), differs from post-positivist realist epistemology in its recognition of the radical negativity that founds our thinking. From this perspective, postpositivist realist epistemology grounds itself solely on appearance, the positivity—the positive social relations and facts we can observe. As Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist Joan Copjec (1994) has argued, identifying the negativity, which cannot appear in the positive social relations and facts, that founds our thinking is not idealist, not contradictory to our materialist stance: "The existence of a thing's materially depends on its being articulated in language, for only in this case can it be said to have an objective—that is to say, a verifiable—existence, one that can be debated by others" (p. 8).

political imaginary enabled by the recognition of diverse class processes, not in terms of its correctness or truth-ness of anything. By constructing capitalism as powerful, domineering and impervious, Mohanty may have perversely both discouraged critical action and obscured fissures such as economic differences that may offer fertile paths for the production of alliances that may enact noncapitalist futures.

How capitalism is thought matters. How we think shapes our notions of capitalist hegemony and the feminist politics we can imagine. The quotation from Mohanty with which I opened this sub-section suggests that she, herself, was shaped by the terms on which she constituted capitalism. As discussed above her capitalism is global, capable of accumulating capital, ever expanding and pervasive. Constituting capitalism with such honorifics makes it hard to see a feminist politics that can challenge this monolith. She, therefore, was forced to endorse a systemic transnational feminist alliance as her political strategy.

Mohanty reformulated orthodox historical materialism to endorse such a systemic transnational feminist alliance. Briefly, in orthodox historical materialism's class politics, class is understood as a subject. Wage laborers are thought to share common class interests that originate from the common experience of the class positions they occupy in capitalist relations of production. Based on these common class interests, which are given by the economic structure, they are to form a class alliance against capitalism. Mohanty found orthodox historical materialism's exclusive focus on class struggles between capitalists and wage laborers to be limiting. In order to overcome this limit she has drawn on anti-racist Third World feminist traditions and micro-power focused power analytics. These analytics are concerned not only with capitalist domination but also gender, racial

and other forms of power relations thought to produce women's subordination as well as resistance. These make her analysis broader than that of orthodox historical materialism.

Mohanty's theorization of transnational feminist politics, however, is still constrained to the identity politics and strategies of orthodox historical materialism. For example, while Mohanty paid special attention to the micro working of power and examines complex relations between the local and the global, class transformation is thought to occur only at macro or global levels. Paralleling orthodox historical materialism's class politics, in order to challenge the global capitalism she so powerfully constructed she set herself up to theorize equally if not more powerful transnational feminist alliances. Her deliberate focus on "*continuities* in the experiences, histories, and strategies of survival of [Third World women] workers" (C. T. Mohanty, 1997, p. 8) supports this project. While this focus allows her to theorize global capitalism as a common object of political struggle through which diverse groups of women across national boarders identify themselves, it simultaneously suppresses the "constant small failures in and interruptions to [capitalist] logic" (Spivak, 1997, p. 483). This global-capitalocentric perspective thus looks away from the abundant economic differences that can be found and the possibility of having multiple class identities. It makes it difficult to theorize strategies for transformations from capitalist and other exploitative and unjust class and non-class processes to nonexploitative and more desirable class and non-class processes at micro or local level that might lead to more desirable transformations at a wider level.

The concept of "epistemic privilege" found in Mohanty's work, as it is combined with orthodox historical materialism, shapes her theorization of politics. Parallel to orthodox historical materialism's economism (economy as prior to superstructure which is

prior to consciousness) global capitalism in combination with other oppressive structures, such as patriarchy and racism, was thought of as obscuring women's true consciousness such that it makes it difficult for them to recognize and to act on their common interests to form transnational anti-racist feminist alliances and solidarities against global capitalism. In order to overcome this issue, Mohanty, drawing on Marx, Lukács, and standpoint feminist theory, theoretically extended to poor Third World women wage laborers "epistemic privilege."[11] Occupying class positions in capitalist relations of production in the context of gender, racial and other dominations they are thought to have "a special social location in the international division of labor which *illuminates* and *explains* crucial features of the capitalist processes of exploitation and domination" (C. T. Mohanty, 1997, p. 7). The knowledge produced by poor Third World women who "recognize" their "common interests" as gendered and racialized wage laborers was thought of as "accurate."[12] This recognition or consciousness emanating from their "special social location" is absolutely necessary for constructions of systemic transnational feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist alliances and solidarities among women across differences. These alliances and solidarities are ranged against a powerful and rhetorically familiar systemic "global capitalism" whose innovation is to utilize and transform existing

[11] Postpositivist realist Paula M. L. Moya (1997) has defined epistemic privilege as "a special advantage with respect to possessing or acquiring knowledge about how fundamental aspects of our society (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) operate to sustain matrices of power" (p. 136). She has specified it further by saying that "The key to claiming epistemic privilege for people who have been oppressed in a particular way stems from an acknowledgement that they have experiences—experiences that people who are not oppressed in that same way usually lack—that *can* provide them with information we all need to understand how hierarchies of race, class, gender, and sexuality operate to uphold existing regimes of power in our society" (p. 136).

[12] This postpositivist realist historical materialism not only privileges some and but considers others who have not yet "recognized" their "common interests" as having "inaccurate" knowledge.

gender, racial and other forms of domination. In this politics the women with an "accurate" consciousness are constructed as the historical agents who are the driving force of the revolutionary oppositional movements against global capitalism, patriarchy, racism and other forms of domination. The theory thus also gives these subjects ontological privilege.

Mohanty's politics, like any process, are contradictory. Although presented as materialist, her conceptualization of common interests among women is given by structures, in which an economic structure is given privilege, prior to collective actions. Drawing on Jónasdóttir Mohanty (1997) has complicated her historical materialist informed theory of common interests by integrating individuals' needs and desires to its collective aspect: a formal, collective aspect and a more individualized, subjective aspect that may work against the former (I will discuss this latter aspect further below). Global capitalism that utilizes gender, racial and other power relations is understood as providing the primary common structural location for women across differences transnationally. This common structural location in turn provides the women workers with the common interests around which they can form alliances and solidarities prior to their collective actions.

Anti-essentialist Marxists Chakrabarti and Cullenberg (2003), in agreement with Hindess, have argued that interests are not given structurally. They are not there waiting to be recognized with the aid, perhaps, of the right theory. They are understood to be produced by specific people in specific contexts and they are realized (and continuously re-produced) at the moment of their action. For example, an anti-essentialist would read the Korean women workers who occupied the factory in Masan in 1989, an example used in Mohanty (1997), differently. Mohanty has argued that prior to this event these

women did not have access to an analysis of their common structural location and that they did not recognize their common interests as originating from that location. Rather, than argue that these women failed to recognize their common interests, an anti-essentialist would argue that these common interests did not exist prior to collective actions. Common interests were constituted, realized, continually transformed in and were specific to their concrete political struggles.

Another contradiction found in Mohanty's politics is that it can be understood as oppressive and exclusive. It implies (although not openly admits) those who have not yet recognized theoretically pre-given common interests to have a false or inaccurate consciousness. While all Third World women who participate in capitalist relations of productions are implied possibly to have epistemic privilege, the knowledge produced by those who have come to "recognize" their pre-given "common interests" as gendered and racialized wage laborers who occupy class positions in capitalist relations of production is thought of as "accurate." This perspective, as opposed to Mohanty's self-declared objectives, strips agency as knowledge producers from those who have not yet "recognized" those interests pre-given by structures or perhaps more precisely, by Mohanty's ☺ theory. Also, in order to take positions in these politics, those who do not occupy class positions as wage laborers in capitalist relations of production are either forced to identify themselves in reference to those relations though they may be contrary to their own social locations. If they do not follow this path they are excluded from the politics. This theorization is made possible by a theory that monolithically represents the field of economy as capitalism and that gives privilege to women who participate in capitalist class process as productive laborers. An overdeterminist perspective recognizes women participating in diverse class processes in any given time and place thus their

different social locations. This reading of their position is not compatible with the notion of epistemic privilege found in Mohanty.

There is, yet, another way that this theory is exclusive. In giving potential epistemic privilege only to poor Third World women who occupy class positions in capitalist relations of productions this theory denies non-Third World women's agency as knowledge producers. No matter how hard non-Third World women attempt to articulate a reality, their knowledge is considered less accurate than that of their poor Third World allies who find their common interests pre-given by this theory. This theory expects the correctly politically engaged subject to see the world through the right theory, "a revised race-and-gender-conscious historical materialism," which transforms their consciousness and allows them to see a "reality" that they can objectively access. My critique of this, the way I understand it, is consistent with the postpositivist realist premise that knowledge is theoretical laden. Whose knowledge counts as accurate depends on the theory drawn to articulate that reality. It is a theory, or perhaps more accurately a theorist, who acts as an authoritative reference, a knowing-subject, able to determine who is more capable of representing reality accurately. This critique is not to move away from critically engaging in the most marginalized women's experience in any way. Instead of accusing Mohanty of suffering a false consciousness, an overdeterminist perspective recognizes focusing on women in the most marginalized communities and attributing to them as discursive and ethico-political choice. It grants neither epistemic nor ontological privilege to either less privileged or to more privileged women. As stated before, what matters is the different implications and effects it produces, not its correctness or the truth-ness of its assertions.

Mohanty's capitalocentric intervention makes it impossible to see the proliferation of economic conditions within which women are constituted. This obscures the necessarily local manifestations of capitalist and non-capitalist economies and blurs both their effects and the contextually shaped responses of women. Also, her conceptualization of a transnational feminist alliance firmly grounded in realist epistemology produces contradictory effects which makes it difficult if not impossible to realize such an alliance. One discursive effect of her intervention, contrary to her strong commitment to decolonization, is the production of an alternative and perhaps differently colonizing economic knowledge and politics.

How, then, can we theorize an alliance among women across differences, including class differences? How might we teach transnational feminist thought that motivates privileged subjects, for example, students in northern universities, to take part in alliances as active agents in their own communities and, at the same time, with women in and from "the Two-Thirds World" in a manner that does not marginalize them? One challenge here is how to construct a nodal point, a commonly identified yet perhaps differently understood political imaginary, with which women in the most marginalized communities and more privileged subjects could partially identify themselves as actors, without having Capitalism (capitalism in an abstracted form) as the vantage point nor necessarily theorizing common interests among diverse group of women prior to their action. Although I do not have definite answers to these questions, this is a driving question for me in this dissertation.

So far we have examined capitalocentrism in Mohanty's theorization of society. We now turn to examine her power essentialism.

Power Essentialism

Power plays a fundamental role in Mohanty's theorization of society. She has reformulated historical materialism by drawing on Michel Foucault's micro politics of power as well as Dorothy Smith's relations of ruling. She has paid special attention to microworkings of small-scale systems of power relations within which historically and socially constructed processes such as gender, race, class, and caste, produce women. These analytics enable her to theorize the social as not simply divided by two opposing groups of people, the capitalists and the working class, as an orthodox historical materialism would tend to do.

> Rather than posit any simple relation of colonizer and colonized, or capitalist and worker, the concept "relations of ruling" posits multiple intersections of structures of power and emphasizes the *process* or *form* of ruling, not the frozen embodiment of it (as, for instance, in the notion of "social indicators" or women's status), as a focus for feminist analysis. (C. T. Mohanty, 1991a, p. 14)

She suggested that while dynamic multi-layered power relations (e.g. capitalist, gender and race dominations) locate women differently, that they simultaneously enable us to relate and to form alliances. She encouraged us to analyze the relational workings of small-scale systems of power in our everyday lives. While she did not argue that our findings will be identical to those of others, this exercise gives us a foundation from which we can begin to relate our experiences with others', find commonalities, and on those bases form alliances. In her work Mohanty used the intersecting power relations of class, gender, and race as an example.

While putting an emphasis on resistance, Mohanty has recognized power largely as domination and as the central explanatory factor. It is the lens through which she views an economic category of class, that is capitalism, and cultural categories of gender and race. The entire terrain, social and economic, appears subsumed under political process

of domination. Her economism, which descends directly from her historical materialism, directs her to present capitalism as that which shapes gender and race while the converse influence is rarely found. Capitalism exploits and dominates Third World women by utilizing and transforming existing and gender and racial power relations.

Anti-Essentialist Marxist Critique of Power Essentialism

From an anti-essentialist Marxist perspective class is conceived of as processes of surplus production, appropriation and distribution rather than as relations of domination. In this perspeetive exploitation and domination need not correspond. For example, Mohanty (1997) represented Punjabi Sikh women workers in family businesses in Britain as dominated and exploited by an indigenous patriarchy within a racist British capitalist economy since, among other things, their identity as workers is rendered invisible even to themselves. From an anti-essentialist perspective, these women are recognized as laborers within a feudal class process. Their surplus is appropriated by other family members (husbands or fathers) in use value form and, in turn, those who appropriate their surplus grant them the means of their subsistence. This exploitative class process is seen to be stabilized by ties of familial obligation. This analytic makes it possible to see that these women are possibly exploited within a feudal class process. Once this is distinguished, it becomes possible also to see how other unequal processes in which they are embedded, such as political process of domination, cultural process of gendering and racializing, and psychic process of desiring for upward mobility, provide conditions of existence for this feudal exploitation. Once framed this way it becomes possible to see that the assertions we find in Mohanty, that these women are dominated by global capitalism and that their invisibility makes them further exploited, is both different and of limited political help.

This is not to say that relations of power have nothing to do with class process. Far from it. In an overdeterminist analysis non-class processes such as power relations are considered. What this approach offers is the ability to distinguish possible exploitation within class processes from domination in political relations of power. These, of course, are not mutually independent in any ontological manner, but if we reduce class to power relations of domination and subordination, then it becomes difficult if not impossible to see contradictions that may be politically salient. For example, people who suffer apparently total political domination may not be exploited. Their class position of, for example, producing, appropriating and distributing their surplus as independent commodity producers may offer a valuable starting point in constructing an alternative relationship to the structures that subordinate them.

Lacanian Psychoanalytic Critique of Power Essentialism/Historicism

As I mentioned above, Mohanty (1997) has drawn on Jónasdóttir to acknowledge the role of Third World women workers' subjective needs and desires in her theorization of common interests among Third World women workers across national borders. These "individualized, and group based 'needs and desires'" that give strength and meaning to "agency" are thought to be "the result of agency," which sometimes acts against realizing their "common interests in formal terms (i.e., the claim to actively 'be among,' to choose to participate in defining the terms of one's own existence, or acquiring the conditions for choice)" (p. 23). While it is important to take into account needs and desires, she entirely overlooks the dynamics of the negativity that become visible through a lens provided by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. What does this mean? Why does this matter?

In the pattern of analysis taken by Mohanty, sexual difference, the entry point for psychoanalysis, does not exist. A careful reading of her work reveals that she appears to

understand a subject as consisting in multiple identities (e.g., gender, race, class and caste) whose desire does not involve repression or the negativity. As with feminist analyses that are not influenced by psychoanalysis, she has deployed social construction of gender as the entry point of her analysis. It is understood as part of power relations along with other axis of power relations, such as race and caste. She has examined its articulation with other micro-workings of power relations within the closed totality of capitalism in a particular historical context. These, together, are recognized as producing a category of women. In addition, as discussed above, the deemed accuracy of her consciousness is determined by whether she is able appropriately to analyze contradictions through the use of the right theory. A subject with an accurate consciousness, whose desires and needs correspond to her interests in being among others, is thought of as capable of exercising her agency against global capitalism. However, even with an accurate consciousness, her ability to exercise her agency to resist global capitalism can be interfered with by her desires and needs when these do not correspond with her interest in being among others. Since political agency against global capitalism can only be exercised by a subject who has an accurate consciousness, one whose desires and needs correspond to her interests in being among others, a subject who lacks such consciousness is implied to remain dominated and exploited by global capitalism.

The troubling aspects here, as seen from a psychoanalytic perspective, stem from her historicism[13]: that women who have an inaccurate consciousness can be dominated by capitalism and other forms of power relations without being able to exercise their

[13] Her historicism stems partly from the recurring tendency to conceive of psychoanalysis as a dispensable dimension within feminist studies. Some transnational feminists, along with other feminists, have turned away from psychoanalysis (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001).

agency, that only those who have an accurate consciousness can exercise agency, and that their desires can correspond fully to their interests. These imply that women exist only within networks of power relations, that is, within positive social relations and, as such, that they are historicizable. This critique of historicism does not mean that a psychoanalytic perspective would reject historically investigating women. Rather, this perspective holds that a constitutive aspect of woman, the negativity – differently known as sexual difference, the radical contingency or the unconscious – cannot be historicized and this recognition is crucial.[14]

With its recognition of the negativity a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective offers a different reading of the lack from that of Mohanty. Where her subjects may lack an accurate consciousness, the Lacanian subject is split from its own desire as a consequence of entering the socio-symbolic realm. The split or the lack is created by a subject repressing its desire for, let us say, incest or some other egoistic enjoyment. By rejecting such enjoyment, saying "No!" to the sadistic compulsions of our moral law (i.e., her *superego*) that urges it to go beyond the law, the subject comes to desire not to desire it.[15] This desire is repressed and unrealized in its conscious social relations or the positivity. It remains outside of the positivity. Even when it appears in the positivity momentarily, a subject, by saying "No!" to the sadistic compulsions of our moral law, consciously pushes it back into the negativity. The split or lack produces a condition wherein its subjectivation will always and necessarily fail because there is an inassimilable surplus (the

[14] This historicist tendency is not specific to Mohanty. Most sociological analyses do not examine sexual difference.

[15] *Superego* is instituted at the moment of entering the socio-symbolic field. It functions as a demonic agency that commands subjects to go beyond our moral law and experience absolute enjoyment, however, it simultaneously prohibits them from accessing it.

object a), which cannot be symbolized in but constantly troubles the positivity. It is this surplus that causes a subject to desire and simultaneously blocks a subject from experiencing the full realization of its desire.

From a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective, Mohanty's subject appears to be undivided. This undivided subject does not reject its desire but comes to desire an object directly. As mentioned above, Mohanty, by drawing on Jónasdóttir, expands a theory of common interests. What is missing in this understanding of desire is that this desire is made possible by a subject who first represses its own desire. A divided, split subject is not motivated by self-interests. It does not seek her own good. It, instead, acts contrary to its own will, thus, is in conflict with itself.

A Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective illuminates contradiction within a subject even though the subject might appear to be a coherent individual in the positive social relations. A subject's repressed unconscious desire, which is not considered by Mohanty, constantly and unexpectedly interferes with its stable identification. That is, it unpredictably interferes with formations of its individualized and group-based needs and desires and its interests in being among others (i.e., families, feminist allies or whatever else she affirms that she desires). What a subject of the lack egoistically desires and the conscious content of her interest in being among others will never fully coincide. It remains always radically contradictory and contingent in some ways. Rather than producing a subject who lacks an accurate consciousness or a right theory to examine contradictions in one's social location, this perspective, by illuminating the negativity of subjectivity, understands the same subject to be resisting its own egoistic desire in its negativity and enacting agency ethically on terms provided by its constitutive discourses, practices and institutions. It enables us to conceive of the term subject as pertaining to the

"excess" or the "indivisible remainder" (Žižek, 1998, p. 78) which, by its very nature, escapes the determination of power. A split subject acts in manners that may be understood not only to maintain the socio-symbolic field in which it is a subject, as Mohanty identifies, but also to subvert that order in a more radically contingent way than her perspective can offer. That is, power can never fully close on itself. There are necessarily significant instabilities within its very heart. When agency and resistance are understood only against an object that is set up by a right theory in the positivity, these subjects' contradictory agency and resistance are obscured.

The discussion of the absence of the negativity in Mohanty's theorization above extends to a question regarding formulations of alliances and solidarities. Mohanty has theorized formulations of alliances and solidarities among women across differences as possible when subjects' individual needs and desires and their interests in being within alliances and solidarities coincide. One of Mohanty's conscious desires is to challenge global capitalism that dominates and exploits women transnationally. To do so, Mohanty has been theorizing formulations of feminist alliances and solidarities for more than two decades. Her earlier work focused more on those among poor Third World women and today not only on those but also on those between poor Third World women and more privileged women. This theorization is only possible when one eliminates consideration of the negativity from the social.

From a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective, Mohanty is a split subject whose desire can only ever be satisfied temporarily by covering up her internal lack with ever-enlarging visions and strategies for transnational feminist alliances and solidarities. From this practice she is understood to experience a sequence of necessarily temporary enjoyments. This enjoyment, like the individualized and group-based needs and desires

Jónasdóttir articulates, could be understood to give "strength and meaning to [her] agency." However, a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective goes on to inform us that it simultaneously prevents her from confronting an impossible truth: how her desire, which can never be fully satisfied, is articulated within her Capitalism, for this encounter would be traumatic in that it would terminate her enjoyment. Thus, it is her unconscious desire to avoid such a traumatic encounter.

What would ensure such traumatic encounters? As discussed above, Mohanty conceives of the economy monolithically as capitalist. The idea of diverse class economies falls outside of her analysis. The absence of these diverse class economies within her analysis ensures that she can never encounter one fundamental antagonism: the impossibility of overthrowing her Capitalism with her transnational feminist alliances and solidarities. This is an antagonism whose recognition would hazard the destitution of her symbolic position and her identity, the disintegration of her Capitalism and her theorization of transnational feminist alliances and solidarities. The circumscribed enjoyment Mohanty would experience within her perspective ensures that she never encounters such traumatic enjoyment (i.e., the overthrow of her Capitalism). The unconscious desire to avoid such traumatic encounter in part explains her ever-enlarging visions not only for transnational feminist alliances and solidarities but also for her Capitalism. This perpetual project covers over the internal negativity with a fantasy of overthrowing her ever-enlarging Capitalism by her ever-enlarging transnational feminist alliances and solidarities. Her historicist analytics, in combination with the enjoyment she experiences by avoiding such traumatic encounters, force her to maintain her desire in relation to Capitalism by repeatedly attempting to overthrow that Capitalism through her alliances and solidarities. In repeating this cycle she avoids the problematic of how she is

ideologically interpellated and how she relates to her own lack. She, thus, provides conditions of existence for the Capitalism she claims to reject.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985), elaborating the psychoanalytic notion of the negativity in ideological analysis as antagonism, argued that alliances or any political formulation that does not take into account the negativity is doomed ultimately to fail. The negativity will continuously and contingently subvert the stability of any and all political formulations. Rather than conceiving of the social as a closed totality of networks of power relations centered on the economy, they argued that the social should be read as filled with a multiplicity of discourses structured around the negativity or "antagonism." Each process, including the formulation of alliances, is fixed only temporarily and always susceptible to overdetermined change. This theoretical perspective releases us from the need to produce a privileged common identity, such as gendered and racialized workers who occupy specific class positions, as is done by Mohanty. Instead, it argues for the formation of alliances across differences grounded on the recognition of the dynamics of the negativity. These alliances are oriented toward a common political imaginary that is continuously constituted by multiple meanings and is produced through ongoing processes of the temporary fixing of continually subverted and renegotiated meanings. It is formed by subjects of the lack who have multiple and perhaps mutually contradictory identities, needs and desires. These subjects are located in specific sites. They draw partial identification from the commonly identified yet possibly differently understood political imaginary that they are pursuing. Common interests among these subjects are not understood to be something they come to recognize. These interests are not pre-given by a closed totality centered on a particular understanding of the economy, rather, they are continually produced through ongoing concrete and necessarily local political processes.

The capitalocentrism, power essentialism and epistemic privilege that haunt Mohanty's work make it difficult to put forward the political vision and strategies for which she so passionately advocates. In order to illuminate processes, practices and discourses that are obscured in Mohanty's capitalocentric and power essentialist approach to society, I now re-read Maria Mies' study on women lace makers in Narsapur, India (1982) from an overdeterminist perspective.

Re-reading the Analysis of the Women Lace Makers in Narsapur

Mohanty (1997) understood Mies' study as an illustration of "how capitalist production relations are built upon the backs of women workers defined as *housewives*" (p. 12). Here women lace makers' labor was articulated in relation to capitalist production in the putting-out lace industry. All of these lace makers were assumed to have contributed to the development of capitalist class processes. All of the exporters were assumed to be productive (or industrial) capitalists who have appropriated surplus labor from lace makers in the form of surplus value. The relationship between the women lace makers and the exporters was exploitative.

Let us look at the same study from an overdeterminist perspective.[16] Most of the lace makers in this study did not appear to be wage laborers in capitalist relations of production. They received advances and/or thread from agents who were temporary wage laborers employed by exporters and/or merchants. This arrangement does not necessarily mean that these lace makers participated in capitalist class processes or that they were exploited by capitalists. For instance, those lace makers who knew attachment

[16] It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze Mies' entire study from an overdeterminist perspective. However, the following analysis shows some examples of what it can illuminate.

work, mostly Christian and some Kapu women, appear to have had some control over where they worked; how many pieces they produced and sold; to whom they sold (hawkers, merchants and/or agents); where they sold; and what portion of the surplus they have produced and appropriated they would distribute to whom. These laborers produced and then appropriated their own surplus labor. They, thus, appear to have occupied class positions in *independent* rather than capitalist fundamental class processes.[17] Gabriel (1990) theorized this act of self-appropriation as *self-exploitation*. This term highlights the private and individualized characters of this act which distinguishes it from collective appropriation and it is distinct from the form of exploitation found in capitalist relations of production. When some of these women identified themselves not as capitalist wage laborers but as petty or independent commodity producers, Mohanty (1997) implied that their (true) consciousness was obscured by "the ideologies that define them as *nonworkers*" (p. 14). From an overdeterminist perspective, these lace makers were right to identify themselves as independent commodity producers. In fact, it was Mohanty in this case who decided who could be counted as workers and what kind of workers they were.

The independent lace makers appropriated their own surplus. They, therefore, were involved in an independent *distributive* class process. That is, these independent lace makers were not only laborers in an independent class process who produced surplus, but

[17] Not all commodities exchanged in market are capitalist commodities, commodities produced in capitalist relations of production. What is produced by these independent laborers is an independent commodity. Also, ownership of means of production is not an essential factor to determine in which class process one participates. These independent commodity producers owned means of production, however, even if they didn't they are still considered to participate in independent class process if they produce and appropriate their surplus labor. This logic applies to capitalist class process. Capitalists do not need to own the means of production in order to be capitalists. For example, capitalists can lease their means of production.

they also were involved in merchanting. These independent lace makers sold their independently produced lace commodities to hawkers, merchants and/or agents from their home or at a local market. This is a form of labor that does not produce surplus but it provides conditions of existence for their self-appropriation of surplus. Some of these women borrowed money from moneylenders for production purposes and distributed a portion of their surplus to pay back the interest on the funds they borrowed.[18] In this case, moneylenders, who received a distribution from, their surplus labor (interest) were involved in independent distributive class processes. These moneylenders provided conditions of existence for the independent lace makers to self-appropriate surplus. In other cases, some lace makers became sub-agents or agents who collected independent lace commodities from other independent laborers and, after adding labor to individual lace pieces by jointing them together (if they knew attachment work), sold those commodities on to bigger agents or exporters. When collecting lacework, these women participated in independent distributive class processes as non-producers of surplus. They then produced surplus as a lace maker themselves with the addition of their labor to the input (the independently produced lace commodities they attached), that is, while they were involved in an independent fundamental class processes as laborers who produce surplus.

One of the women in this study calculated the profits on her independent capital and became a big merchant herself. She also started lending money to other independent lace makers. When she personified capital by loaning to independent lace makersa

[18] A lace maker could also borrow money from a moneylender for non-productive, purposes. In that case, the moneylender is not understood to provide conditions of existence for the independent lace makers' self-appropriation.

quantum of money and receiving back a larger quantum, she is understood to be a money-lending capitalist.[19] Since a money-lending capitalist is not involved in the fundamental class processes within which surplus value is produced, that is, a money-lending capitalist is an unproductive capitalist, she cannot be understood to be exploiting others. However, this does not mean that there was no inequality or struggle between the independent lace makers who received loans and their moneylenders. A moneylender could, for example, attempt to impose an interest rate on an independent lace maker that would threaten the viability of the class process in which she was both a producer and an appropriator of surplus.

The female merchant mentioned above occupied class positions in multiple class processes. In her own lace production she was a producer, appropriator and distributor of surplus in an independent class process. As a merchant she occupied a position of receiving a portion of the surplus produced by women who were producers, appropriators and distributors of surplus in an independent class process. And as a moneylender she occupied a position in these women's independent distributive class process as receiving interest paid out of their surplus and in return providing a condition of their existence (cash). Here an overdeterminist approach makes it possible to see that one person can concurrently be in multiple and mutually contesting class processes. As such, one individual may simultaneously have multiple class identities whose respective interests may stand in mutual contradiction.

In addition to the distributive class processes of merchanting and moneylending mentioned above, these women were embedded in a myriad of non-class economic,

[19] Marx identified three ways to personify capital. Productive capitalist, merchant capitalist and money-lending capitalist. See Resnick and Wolff (1987, particularly p. 142).

political and cultural processes that provided conditions of existence for their self-appropriation of surplus. For the Christian independent commodity producers, processes, such as the political and economic processes of British colonization, religious processes of Christian missionary activities and other cultural processes of gendering enabled these women to learn the whole lace making production processes which provided conditions for their existence. In the case of Kapu independent commodity producers the conditions are different. Destitution in part precipitated by political and economic processes of agricultural reform in which their husbands, who were landowners and farmers, lost their land, the cultural processes that led their husbands to refuse to work on others' lands, Hindu religious practices of purdah, their own lack of public political and/or economic involvement, and cultural processes of gendering all contributed to the emergence of conditions in which they learned lace production at home. For the Kapu women, being able to sell their lace commodities in a local market was not thought of as empowering. In accordance with Hindu purdah practices, these women wanted to identify themselves as housewives rather than workers.

The Kapu female lace makers in Serepalam, who wanted to identify themselves as housewives rather than as workers, were implied by Mohanty to lack accurate consciousness. An overdeterminist perspective offers a different reading. A Kapu female lace maker in Serepalam could be understood as repressing her own egoistic enjoyment. She chose not to go to bed early or to rest between household chores. She resisted the compulsion of our moral law (i.e. her *superego*) to enjoy her own desire. Instead of acting on her egoistic desires, she might have desired, for example, to reduce the amount of thread she uses in making an individual lace piece so that she could make an extra piece that she could sell in a local market in order to generate even just a tiny bit more money

for her family's subsistence. With this, she might have engaged further in self-exploitation and avoided the alternative of being further engaged in feudal exploitation within her household. From this perspective, thus, it would be misleading to see her consciousness as obscured by a racialized capitalist patriarchy: that a racialized capitalist patriarchy wanted her to desire a specific object. Such a reading obscures her agency and its internal contradictions.

The relationship between the independent lace makers and hawkers, merchants and agents was based on commodity exchange. While this was unequal, these transactions did not involve exploitation. In the anti-essentialist Marxist analytic, exploitation is understood as appropriation of surplus labor from productive laborers by non-laborers. Exploitation occurs only in fundamental class processes where surplus labor is produced. It does not occur when those goods are circulated. What makes it difficult to think of this relationship as non-exploitative might be the fact that these independent lace makers did not have complete control over prices of the commodities they produced. However, there is no necessary relationship between independent commodity production and control over price.[20] Prices, like any other entity, were overdetermined by myriad of other (non-class) processes, such as market exchange (how the price was set) and power (who was in control). For instance, the wage of the agents is the difference between what they received from the exporters and what they gave to the lace makers. The male agents who came to the marketplace with money and wanted to secure better profit could use coercion (power) to try and lower the price given to the female lace makers who, for their part, needed money for their own and their families' survival. In fact, in order to secure

[20] van der Veen (2000) makes this claim in the context of the sex industry. My analysis here is benefited from her analysis.

their continued existence as independent laborers many of these lace makers were compelled to accept prices so low that they had to cut back their necessary labor. That is, they had to lower their standard of living. Even with this type of effort, many were unable even to secure their necessary labor. For their part, the agents could not exercise too much power because exporters and their agents did not have direct means to compel lace makers to work only for them. They were in competition with other buyers for lace-makers' products and purchasing lace is a condition of their continued existence. Again, stating that there was no exploitation between the independent lace makers, merchants, agents and exporters does not imply that there was no struggle or inequity. An overdeterminist perspective recognizes not only the co-existence of different class processes, but also the influence of non-class economic, political and cultural processes on class and non-class struggles in a given society.

Independent and money-lending capitalist class processes are not the only alternatives illuminated by an anti-essentialist analysis. Though diminishing due to men's emigration to Middle Eastern countries, feudal class processwere also observable in the lace industry. Lace makers, who were wives of hawkers, merchants, and agents and who knew attachment work or the entire lace production processes, appear to have been involved in feudal class processes. Their husbands brought them individual lace pieces made by other lace makers. They added labor to them by assembling them into the final or the second-to-the-final commodity forms (e.g. bed spread with or without finishing and stretching). The surplus labor produced by these women was appropriated by their husbands or male family members in use value form in return for the provision of means of subsistence. This relationship appears to have been based on familial or mutual obligation. Appropriation of their surplus by their husbands or male family members

renders these women feudal serfs and in turn their husbands/male family members as feudal lords. Also, the surplus produced by the women of the houses of the exporters who performed the final production process, which is finishing and stretching, was appropriated by their male family members, in this case, the exporters. This relationship also appears to be feudal since it seems to have been based on familial obligation. Thus, even at this level some exporters appear to have been involved and exploited not in capitalist but in feudal fundamental class processes.

Some of the women who occupied class positions in feudal fundamental class process as feudal serfs also appear to have engaged in feudal distributive class process as feudal managers. For instance, they bought individual pieces from other independent lace makers and after attaching them together sent the final commodity forms to their husbands (hawkers) who sold them in cities. Also, some women supervised their daughters' lace production. These female feudal managers provided conditions for feudal lords to appropriate surplus. They were enablers of not only their own exploitation but also that of their daughters. They participated in both feudal fundamental and distributive class processes. Moreover, single or temporarily single independent lace makers (whose husbands either died or were working overseas) appropriated their daughters' surplus labor and, in so doing, participated in feudal fundamental class processes as feudal lords extracting their daughters' surplus labor. Thus, these women were involved in both independent and feudal fundamental class processes. One among the myriad of conditions of existence for these single women's participation in the appropriation of surplus in feudal fundamental class processes was taking their daughters out of school. An overdeterminist analysis illuminates noncapitalist forms of exploitation

some of the lace makers engaged in not only as the exploited but also as exploiters and allows us to see what provided its conditions of existence.

There do seem to have been capitalist class processes in the lace industry. The skilled older women (as well as men in the case of newly established exporters) who performed the final production process in the houses of the exporters were employed by the exporters. This relationship was not based on familial or debt obligation as in feudal class processes. They appear to have participated in capitalist fundamental class processes as productive laborers who produced surplus value. The exporters, non-producers of surplus, were involved in capitalist class processes as appropriators and distributors of surplus labor from these productive laborers in the form of surplus value. Thus, these laborers were exploited by the exporters. However, the exporters could not exploit them too much. If they did, they would have lost these skilled older women and these skilled women might have revealed their secrets, such as designs, to others.

Another way to secure conditions of existence for the exporters' appropriation of surplus value from their wage laborers was temporarily hiring agents, who performed some managerial work, such as giving threads and collecting lace from independent lace makers. The exporters distributed some portion of surplus from the capitalist class process (finishing) to these agents. These agents provided materials to the independent women who produced partially finished goods. These independent goods were then purchased by the exporter (perhaps in competition with other exporters) and given to his wage laborers to finish. Thus, these agents participated in capitalist distributive class processes while most likely themselves also being an independent or feudal merchant involved in independent and/or feudal subsumed class processes and acting as a feudal lord within

their own household).[21] As mentioned above, not all exporters seem to have engaged in capitalist class processes. An anti-essentialist analysis, which neither assumes capitalism's existence prior to its analysis nor conceives of capitalism as a foundational principle, makes it possible to see diverse class processes in the lace industry and their different and contradictory conditions of existence.

An anti-essentialist analysis also enables us to see other class processes in which these lace makers were involved in their daily lives. It recognizes the household to be a site for the *production* of surplus rather than solely as the site for the *reproduction* of labor power for capitalist class processes.[22] Through this lens the women in this study can be seen as engaged in feudal and/or independent fundamental class processes within the household. They produced goods and services by, for example, cooking and cleaning, and in so doing they produced the labor necessary to reproduce themselves as laborers. They also produced surplus labor: that left over after necessary labor. The goods and services thus produced are not commodities exchanged in the market. Not all class processes involve market exchange. The class process these women were involved in is feudal when the women's surplus labor was appropriated by non-laborers (e.g., their husbands) in use value form and the relationship that secured their exploitation was based on familial or mutual obligation. This is distinct from independent production when single, temporarily

[21] There are different struggles between the laborers and the exporters and the agents and the exporters.

[22] See Safri (2006), Cameron (1996/7, 2000), Fraad, Resnick & Wolff (1994), chapters 3 and 9 of Gibson-Graham (1996) for overdeterminist approaches to household production.

single, or following the suggestion made by Cameron (1996/7), married women appropriated their own surplus.[23]

It is important to take into account these household class processes since they produced their own effects on their lace commodity production. For example, one independent lace maker, whose other female family members did not live with her, spent more time on feudal household production, thus, spent less time on independent lace commodity production than her sisters in-law who had their mother perform household labor. This meant that her sisters in-law could spend more time on independent lace commodity production. In order words, the independent lace maker's exploitation within her feudal household was greater than that of her sisters in-law while her self-exploitation as an independent lace commodity producer is lower than theirs. A host of processes, such as discourses about religion, solidarity and dependency, provided conditions of existence for this form of exploitation. An independent lace maker's willingness and unwillingness to sell her lace commodity in a public market was influenced by her participation in feudal household class process as well as by a whole set of other processes, including the household structure and the social construction of femininity and housewife- or daughter-hood in a particular community at a particular historical period.

---

[23] Some Marxist or socialist feminists have argued that men appropriate thus exploit women's unpaid household labor. In this understanding a woman who enjoys performing household labor is implied to be a victim of patriarchy (and of capitalism) with a false consciousness. In contrast to this view, Cameron (1996/7), drawing on Butler's gender performativity, argued that this woman can be seen as an independent laborer who appropriates and distributes her own surplus. She argued that this woman can be understood as enacting a particular gendered subjectivity through performing domestic labor. In this understanding, this woman is not a victim of patriarchy but an active gendered subject.

We must take into account these complex and different class and non-class processes in which these lace makers participated in their daily lives when we theorize aliance.

In contrast to historical materialist theorization of class transformation from one class structure to another, at a macro level anti-essentialist Marxists see class transformations from one class process to another as occurring all the time, andthese transformations are thought to be neither total nor uni-directional. For example, the practice of giving advances to independent lace makers was instituted partly in response to the increasing poverty of these lace makers. Mies' analysis indicated the possibility that the advances from agents could precipitate the emergence of feudal relationships based on debt obligation between bonded lace makers and specific agents and/or the exporters. The advances could be understood as a kind of loan, similar to feudal serfs taking loans in cash or seed stock from their lords, for whom they need to work in order to pay off the loan. That is, the balance of class structures in lace making could have been shifted from independent towards feudal. In and of themselves these transformations would be considered undesirable since the surplus was now appropriated by others. Of course, other conditions need to be taken into account. The lace makers, for example, may have paid back the debt and returned to independent production. As mentioned above, a successful independent lace maker who became a moneylender could have those who owed debt work for her and this relationship would be based on debt obligation. In this case, her class positions involved independent, money-lending capitalist and feudal. A lace maker who made profit on independent capital could hire other lace makers to do lace work for her. Thus, it is possible to be both independent and capitalist. Likewise, it is possible to transform from independent to communal if some of the independent lace makers would have gotten together to collectively appropriate their surplus labor. This

last one is thought desirable from a class standpoint, for it does not involve exploitation. This, however, does not mean that other injustices, such as those related to caste, religion and gender to name a few, can be resolved by a desirable class transformation.

In addition, class changes do not always require changes in class positions. In the case of the independent lace makers who remained independent, class changes would occur, for example, if they took more control over prices. In the case of exploitative class processes, such as feudal or capitalist, desirable class changes would occur if they reduced the fraction of surplus appropriated by others through, for example, forming a union and negotiating employment terms. Also, class changes would occur when the destination of surplus or the fraction of surplus distribution is changed. For example, class changes would occur when a feudal lord, whose daughter was not going to school and who was engaged in lace commodity production at home, started distributing surplus from other laborers to send her/his daughter to school. While feudal exploitation may still exist in his household, and the feudal exploitation of other members of his household may have intensified (both of which require class struggles to eliminate it) sending his daughter to school would be considered desirable from a larger social justice standpoint. In stark contrast to historical materialist approaches to class transformations, an anti-essentialist Marxist approach makes it possible to theorize diverse strategies here (contextually) and now (immediately) to transform conditions of existence of exploitation and class and non-class injustices. Thus, it rejects the idea that class transformations would occur from one particular class process to another at a macro level. No teleology is presumed.

The above class analysis of the female lace makers illuminates diverse class processes in which they possibly engaged. Through the overdeterminist lens provided by Gibson-Graham (1996) Mohanty's analysis is seen to locate noncapitalist class processes,

such as the independent and the feudal, as subsumed within capitalism and they are articulated in relation to the development of capitalism. The combined importance of noncapitalist processes is thought of as smaller since capitalism can contain them all. Capitalism is represented as the totality, as if it were the container of everything else. Even though the purchaser of the lace commodities was in one aspect a capitalist lace enterprise, it does not necessarily follow that the production was done through capitalist relations. Exploitation indeed existed, however, in many cases, it occurred in not capitalist but in feudal and independent class processes. In addition, focusing only on commodity production makes it impossible to analyze non-commodity household production.

Furthermore, filling the field of the economy with Capitalism (in its abstract from) eliminates the possibility of having multiple class identities. This understanding constitutes women simply. They have few identities. Their economic identity as workers is privileged. Those who do not produce surplus in capitalist class processes, for example, are pushed out of the politics that would flow from this analysis. The above analysis demonstrates that one individual can participate in multiple, shifting and contradictory class processes and that one class process could certainly interact with other class and non-class processes that, for example, subordinate women. It also demonstrates that the needs, desires and interests of Christian lace makers would be articulated differently from those of the Hindu lace makers in Serepalam even though both groups of women participated in independent lace commodity production and feudal or independent household production. It, thus, becomes very difficult if not impossible to theorize an alliance centered on capitalist form of exploitation. Even if one attempts to theorize such a politics around all forms of exploitation, this would require political struggles that recognize class

and non-class differences in order to articulate identities of subjects who participate in different forms of exploitation and power relations. The conditions of existence for each class process are different. Being able to recognize different class processes and conditions of existence make it possible to think about strategies as to which conditions to eliminate and alternatively which actively to foster in the immediacy of continually re-negotiated alliances on a daily basis.

In the final section I will delineate a contour of transnational feminist methodology informed by overdeterminist theories deployed in this chapter.

Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices

The kind of analysis I have just outlined do suggest a specific transnational feminist methodology which I name *transnational feminist literacy practice*. The choice of this naming highlights the different theories that inform it. First, transnational feminist thought that enables one to examine how a category of women is produced transnationally by complex economic, political, cultural and other processes, which cut across and go beyond national borders. I situate transnational feminist literacy practices in transnational feminist practices that aim to transform "scattered hegemonies" in a more contextually desirable direction. Second, it draws on a concept called "transnational literacy" theorized by Spivak (1996, 1997, 1999, 2003). This approach of Spivak urges us, feminists and/or development practitioners, to bridge the "epistemic discontinuity" between, in this dissertation, the women objects/subjects of the empowerment discourse and us, who are differently affected by "the financialization of the globe" in our different spheres and locations. Two of the reading strategies for construction of a transnational feminist political imaginary suggested by this approach follow.

One strategy is becoming literate in terms on which the other constructs their own agency. We must "learn to learn from below," from the texts written by the subaltern, "those removed from lines of social mobility" (Spivak, 2003, p. 180), through developing "openness towards the imagined agency of the other" (p. 194). Spivak has argued that those texts written by the subaltern should not be dismissed on the basis of their not using the language of 'high theory.' This approach requires us to develop reading skills that differentiate the subaltern's particular ways of articulating context-specific agendas for decolonization from non-subaltern "speaking for" the subaltern that makes it possible to "fake collective will from below" (Spivak, 2001, p. 14).

A second strategy is becoming literate in the locally specific and contingent formations of capitalism that surround the other. While becoming literate in the agency in the other, we must simultaneously look at "the allegory of capitalism not in terms of capitalism as the source of authoritative reference but in terms of the constant small failures in and interruptions to its logic, which help to recode it and produce our unity" across national borders (Spivak, 1997, p. 483). Transnational literacy, therefore, motivates an *interruptive* transnational feminist political imaginary. This political imaginary explicitly disavows the ideals of liberty, democracy and/or freedom as they exist under capitalism.

These strategies draw on the concept of "literacy practices" developed by scholars who are associated with the New Literacy Studies.[24] Literacy practices implies that literacy is a part of everyday social practice. Literacy is understood not as a set of discrete skills to master. Instead, literacy is one aspect of a ceaselessly changing field of social

[24] See Barton and Hamilton (1998), Barton, Hamilton and Ivanič (2000), Baynham, (1995), Gee (1990), Robinson-Pant (2001, 2004) and Street (1984, 1993, 1995, 2001).

practices that are overdetermined by a myriad of constitutive processes. Having discussed its origin, I will now delineate a few dimensions of this methodology.

One strategy within transnational feminist literacy practices is *to become literate in overdetermination*. Transnational feminist literacy practices presume that every process and site is concurrently constituted and continuously re-constituted by all others. It, therefore, begins from the premise that all processes and sites are always already transnational. These transnational connections are discursively articulated through the concept of entry point: the discursive point from which we begin any overdeterminist analysis. The choice of the site or process that serves as the discursive focus in an overdetermined field is explicitly guided by the analyst's ethico-political choice. It is chosen to support an intervention that will raise consciousness and enable transformations in a particular sector. This choice and the analysis that follows are inherently particular, partial and partisan. Despite other interveners' protests of objectivity, overdeterminist theory argues that this fundamentally partisan bent underpins every intervention.

In transnational feminist analysis one entry point is a category of women. Each category of women is understood to be produced by specific natural, economic, political, cultural, psychic and other processes in its own specific historical site. Choosing a category of women as an entry point does not confer epistemic or ontological privilege. Since all sites or processes in overdeterminist investigation lack essence, selecting one as an entry point gives neither epistemic nor ontological privilege to any process, single or group of subjects. It rejects the possibility of such a privilege. It claims that processes that produce a category of women are given discursive privilege by theory and that this theory is no more essential than any other process or site populating the field of overdetermination. For a second example, an overdeterminist theory could take the

processes that produce the subaltern as its entry point. It would then conceive of that choice as ethico-political and not as epistemic or ontological. Such an analysis, for example, would be hard pressed to claim that the subaltern's privileged epistemic position enables them to reflect reality more accurately than can, say, northern scholars.

Each overdetermined process and site is contradictory. It is propelled by all other processes in different and oft-conflicting directions. By taking a comparative and relational methodology it attends not only to continuities but also to contradictions and contingencies in processes that produce a category of women in a particular place and transnationally. What is compared and made relational is not an essentialized indicator, such as GNP and literacy rate, nation or any of that sort. Its unit of analysis is process. It seeks to illuminate continuities and discontinuities of particular overdetermined process in a particular site through which a category of women is produced in a particular historical site as well as transnationally.

The field of overdetermination is structured around the radical negativity or, in the terms of Laclau and Mouffe (1985), social antagonism. It is this antagonism that enables ongoing flows of overdetermination within which all processes and sites subsist. It is not only the social that lacks the complete fixation but so does each process, site, and subject within it. These are only partially and contingently fixed through political struggles. While an historical analysis is tremendously important to situate its objects contextually this contingency should not be missed. When, as we find in Mohanty, the social is conceived of as the indwelling relations of power, each process, site and subject is thought of as fully articulable, historicizable within the closed totality of relations of power. Overdetermination informs us that such a historicist attempt is doomed to fail, for

there is an inassimilable surplus which cannot be symbolized in but constantly troubles the positivity.

The second strategy discussed in the context of transnational feminist literacy practices is to *become literate in economic difference*. Out of the many possible processes that produce a category of women, this chapter looked at those of class qua surplus. These were not made discursive foci because they are essences. These were chosen because they are obscured by both mainstream and critical discourses, including those of transnational feminism as well as post-development. Leading transnational feminists, like Mohanty, often if not always take an approach that orbits capitalism. Since their approaches have this center a critique of their capitalocentrism can be discursively powerful.

A capitalocentric approach, as in any process, produces contradictions. A logic of necessity, with its focus on continuities, enabled Mohanty to construct capitalism as "a foundational principle" with limited, fixed identities within a closed totality of power relations. Countering this capitalism requires a group of subjects with a single common identity who share common interests. This produces an equally systemic transnational feminist alliance and solidarity. This powerful analysis also obscures specificities. In this chapter I have shown how the class processes through which women are constituted are made invisible. When authors such as Mohanty essentialize class identity they lose the ability to see that the women they analyze may see themselves and may be productively recognized as having multiple, shifting and contradictory class identities. Contrary to the best of their authors' intentions, this pattern of analysis might provide conditions of existence for the exploitation and class injustices associated with surplus distribution, for it does not expose them. The overdeterminist methodology advocated here recognizes and therefore can attend to discontinuities and contingencies not only in capitalist but also in

noncapitalist class processes. This recognition provides a different terrain in which we can then compose our politics.

Class not as subjects or power but as process of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus makes it possible to decenter the essentialized category of economy. It enables us to recognize a capitalism with multiple, shifting and contradictory identities which are always susceptible to change; diverse class processes and their ceaseless transformations; and different types of exploitation and class injustices associated with surplus distribution. It does not privilege class processes of commodity production in a familiar site. It also seeks to illuminate oft-invisible class processes in unfamiliar sites and those of non-commodity production. Putting a focus not only on production but also on distribution enables us to theorize a politics which neither privileges productive laborers nor excludes unproductive laborers who provide conditions of existence for appropriation of surplus. In this analysis women can be seen potentially to participate in diverse class processes. These can include those which are not capitalist. These women cannot, therefore, be presumed to have the common interests that we find in capitalocentric analyses. A non-capitalocentric reading makes it possible to see how a single individual can occupy positions in more than one class processes at once, that those processes and their position in them constantly shift, and that these can be contradictory in nature. Thus, women potentially have multiple, shifting and contradictory class identities. On the one hand, an overdeterminist analysis makes it difficult to theorize a broad alliance. It does not allow us to theorize alliance against a single object such as global capitalism as the central organizing factor. On the other, an alliance based on an essentialized notion of capitalism would be doomed to fail in insofar as it is structurally blind to, for example,

different class processes and different conditions of existence through which women are constituted.

The third strategy recommended by the overdeterminist perspective offered here is *to become literate in desire.* While overdetermination implies the radical negativity, it does not tell us directly about desire. Thus, it requires a separate strategy that draws on psychoanalysis. Rather than focusing our analysis only on positive, articulable desires that appears in the socio-symbolic field, this methodology also attends to repressed unconscious desires that play a radically contingent role in its subject formation. Each subject is a subject of the lack, that is, it is psychically divided into the positivity and the negativity. This approach also enables us to recognize subject's unconscious psychic struggles that contradict to what appears at the level of its consciousness and to articulate their relationships to the social. The implications of this point are taken up in the fourth chapter.

Transnational Feminist Political Imaginaries

The political imaginaries that can be formed subsequent to the analysis offered in this chapter differ from very influential liberal international/global and transnational feminist political imaginaries. One of the characteristics of the imaginary held by global feminists is gender essentialism. Women are thought of as subordinated in the same way universally, thus, interventions formed pursuant to this tradition tends to ignore differences among women.[25] This approach enables more privileged, empowered feminists to speak for less privileged women and to save them from their men. This has connotations of "fake[ing] collective wills from below" (Spivak, 2001, p. 14). The second

[25] The political imaginary produced by Robin Mogan (1984) could be identified as exemplary. See critiques by C. T. Mohanty (1992) and Basu (1995) among others.

imaginary discussed in this chapter is advocated by Mohanty. She suggested that diverse groups of women who recognize themselves as workers under global capitalism share common material interests and that they should come together in alliance. This analysis makes it very hard to see the specificities and contradictions internal to the lives these women lead and this oversight undercuts the political strategy she has advocated. During the course of this chapter I have begun to introduce a transnational feminist political imaginary that complements these. I will conclude this chapter with an outline of this approach in a simplified way. I do this recognizing that I am inviting the critique ofbeing an idealist. The subsequent two chapters will work out the contours of this transnational feminist political imaginary in greater detail.

The transnational feminist political imaginary depicted here and throughout this dissertation is provisional and will always remains so. Its content and form can only be contingently articulated through political struggles. The constant contradictory transformations of its content derive from the radical negativity around which it is formed. Each individual, who is involved in their own time and location-specific activisms, and this includes both the academics and professionals so often curiously absent in the study of development, works on their own objects of focus, these may, for example, be class or race, that bear on process that produce women's subordination. This individual is then connected with others through a common political imaginary. These imaginaries are constituted by, for example, shared discursive construction of preferable states in their objects of struggle, desirable directions for their transformations and/or shared understandings that changes happen all the time in different and oft-contradictory directions, all which are temporary articulated by a collection of subjects involved in a particular historical struggle. This individual recognizes the local manifestations of and,

through them, directly engages the "scattered hegemonies" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b), the multi-dimensional, multi-manifested objects of struggles that produce women's subordination transnationally.[26]

One of the aims of transnational feminist analysis is to produce connections between distant place-based struggles with seemingly disparate objects. Common recognition of these connections secures a condition of existence of a transnational feminist political imaginary. This imaginary could emerge as a multi-faceted nodal point through which different place-based activisms and their subjects partially interconnect. This nodal point is not static. It is built around the recognition of the radical negatively and, as such, has no fixed meaning. The perpetual task of articulating its content will require hegemonic struggles. This imaginary is sustained by what Spivak (1998) calls "ethical singularity," "a mind-changing one-on-one responsible contact" for collective effort (p. 340). This is not a process with a beginning, a middle and an end. It is a perpetual practice. It is grounded in but not limited to the local. With slow, attentive and continuous efforts from all sides a political imaginary can be contingently and temporarily articulated at ever-wider levels without presuming teleology. Through this practice of ethical singularity, common interests are produced momentarily at local as well as wider levels. Each subject actively constitutes herself in relation to others who partially share common interests at multiple levels in multiple locations. Community will form both from the joint act of producing this nodal point and in collective pursuit of the perhaps differently understood political objectives suggested by its shifting content. This

---

[26] "Scattered hegemonies" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b) are those of the interconnected yet scattered economic, political, cultural, and/or legal structures on multiple levels and in multiple locations which collectively delimit the field of legitimate expression for women's capacities while rendering these limits invisible.

methodology aims to interpellate individuals as subjects of transnational feminist activisms by producing transnational connections and by drawing individuals' attentions to them so that we, from our varied locations and by our diverse paths, work to transform "scattered hegemonies."

Capitalocentrism and power essentialism can be found in both post-development and transnational feminist thoughts. These essentialisms may create a terrain within which it is very difficult to recognize and to develop strategies that provide real alternatives to current mainstream approaches. This chapter attempted to delineate a contour of a methodology that is informed by transnational feminist studies, an anti-essentialist Marxian theory of class, Lacanian psychoanalysis and the discourse theory developed by Laclau and Mouffe in order to expose capitalocentrism and power essentialism and their effects within current debates on women's empowerment. The next two chapters explore implications of and if necessary reformulate the methodology delineated in this chapter in order to construct a transnational feminist political imaginary as an alternative nodal point through re-articulation of empowerment that would transform scattered hegemonies that provide conditions of existence for Development. Based on the explorations the concluding chapter of this dissertation revisits the contours of the approach theorized here and explores its pedagogical implications for a Northern university classroom.

CHAPTER III

LITERACY + MICROFINANCE + LEGAL RIGHTS = WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?[1]: BEYOND THE MAKING OF CITIZENS OF "A DEAD END WORLD"[2]

Introduction

Today more and more community development projects aim at empowering Third World women and accept this as the heart of successful Development (with a capital D) that is understood as "the civilizing mission (*la mission civilisatrice*) of the new imperialism" (Spivak, 1998, p. 331). Among other effects, this Development has produced new types of representations of Third World women. Historically, the mainstream discourses of adult literacy education and of women and development have represented Third World women (who are often implicitly assumed to be non-literate) largely in two distinctive ways: within liberal modernization discourses as ignorant mothers/care-takers who need to be enlightened (Kabeer, 1994) and within leftist underdevelopment discourses as victims (C. T. Mohanty, 1991b). Now new ways of representing Third World women have been added to neoliberal development discourses: potential rational economic clients (Rankin, 2001) and, as I will show, active political citizens. Recent work of feminist social scientists of development, such as Rankin, has shown that this significant shift from a welfarist to a neoliberal model within development discourses has produced consequences for Third World women as well. This chapter builds on the insights of these scholars and examines the nature of this shift in the context of newly developed adult

---

[1] I modified the idea of "literacy + legal rights + economic opportunities = empowerment" presented in one of the WEP official documents (Thomas & Shrestha, 1998, December, p. 18).

[2] I borrowed the term from Spivak (1998, p. 342).

literacy training for non/semi-literate women in Nepal. I will focus specifically on the adult literacy training developed by Women's Empowerment Program (WEP), a USAID funded program in Nepal.

The Women's Empowerment Program (WEP) was an award winning two-part training program designed for the economic and political empowerment of non/semi-literate Nepalese women through self-instructional literacy learning that emerged in the mid to late 1990s. I am using WEP as my case study for a number of reasons. First, it exemplifies the mainstream shift from a welfarist to a neoliberal model of development in representation of the Third World women recipients. The official discourse of WEP represents non/semi-literate Third World women not only as potential rational *economic* actors but also as *political* actors. Second, the significant technologies advanced by WEP are consistent with neoliberalism. Unlike many programs that deploy adult literacy, microfinance or human rights training independently or combine the first with the second or third, WEP combined all three in one comprehensive program. Third, it has been represented as an example of "best practices" within major development institutions such as the World Bank, USAID and at the second microcredit summit held in 2002.[3] This type of community development program for women is becoming more common and WEP has been treated as an exemplar within neoliberal women and development discourses.

Examination of this shift in representation of the Third World women recipients is important for three reasons. First, while all interventions both enable and constrain possible actions of subjects, it seems that only the enabling effects produced by this

[3] It is phenomenal for a community development project to win five international awards (Pact, 2002a).

empowering Third World women approach, such as increasing engagement in the exchange-driven market economy (World Bank, 1991) and household decision making processes (World Bank, 2001), are found within official development texts. The constraining effects, such as an increase in the rate of their exploitation and/or inducing a competitive individualism that undermines communal processes (Benería, 1992), are not found within the same texts. These omissions may further obscure existing inequities, such as those of gender, class, caste and imperialism/colonialism, and thereby hazard sustaining existing and perhaps providing new conditions for their existence. Second, the omission of those aspects which are obscured by the official development texts has created a space within which it is possible to represent women homogeneously as good mothers, entrepreneurs and/or citizens, as people whose actions and desires ensure the success of Development within a neoliberal framework. In effect, the manufactured coincidence of development experts' (be they academics or practitioners) expectations and recipients' aspirations for change restricts the field of the possible while rendering that restriction invisible. With this the agents of domination escape responsibility for the paths taken while the futures available are limited to those visible from that terrain. Third, these strategies, omitting the constraining effects of our interventions and accepting the constitution of Third World women as rational economic clients and active political citizens, seem to be signified through a new modality of development rationality or what, building on Foucault's notion of governmentality, I call *developmentality*. By developmentality, I understand an order of development practice and discourse, thus a modality by which power is exercised within the development apparatus.[4] This

[4] The notion of apparatus (or dispositif) is first theorized by Foucault then Deleuze and

developmentality is not static, but rather is constantly being produced as an effect of ongoing relations between the evolution of the development institutions' centralizing powers and the creation of technologies oriented towards subjects of development, be they academics, practitioners or recipients, and intended to govern them in a sustainable way (cf. Brown, 2001). The current developmentality appears to be new because it seems to replace the institutionally exercised and visibly coercive power of development institutions such as the World Bank, USAID or states with a mode of self/group-governance (Rankin, 2001) that is, I will argue, recognized as empowerment. Acknowledging that this developmentality is articulated differently from context to context and that the subjectivities of the women who participated in WEP were produced in the intersection of multiple discourses, it seems appropriate to situate this conversation as a local case study (WEP in this case) within a global political economic context and from that basis to argue for engaging on terms other than those offered by mainstream discourses.

Methodology

Five analytical tools are chosen to pursue this project. First, with his notions of subjects and power, Foucault (1983; 1980) understood *subjects* to be effects of surrounding discourses. That is, subjects are *made* only once individuals are subjected to and thereby *subjectivated* through those discourses. Butler (1997), drawing on Foucault, made this point clearer by arguing that subjection as a kind of power that "not only unilaterally *acts on* a

---

brought into a post-development discourse by Brigg (2001b) who defined the development apparatus as a shifting coagulation of heterogeneous elements (a range of interrelationships) among "'discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions,' and so on" (Foucault as cited in Brigg, 2001b, p. 427) of development.

given individual as a form of domination, but also *activates* or forms the subject" (p. 84). *Subjectivation* thus implies this double-edged process of "the *making* of a subject" (Butler, 1997, p. 84). Further, this making of a subject is considered not to be a one shot activity but engendered through continuous practice (Foucault, 1978).

Second, Foucault used the term *government* in a broad sense of "the conduct of conduct" that can be said as "a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons" (Gordon, 1991, p. 2). What he meant by government rationality or *governmentality* is a constantly shifting relation between technologies of domination of others, which determines "the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination," and those of the self, which "permits individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1997 [1982], p. 225), that delimits what individuals can know. It is used to specify what type of management of individuals inside and outside of WEP was made possible to subjectivate or empower WEP recipients within a contingent intersection of discourses in a productive manner.[5] While subjects may initially be coerced into acting on their own and on the conduct of others, technologies of the self induce in them a growing desire to act, and a pleasure from acting, on themselves in ways that are articulated by their surrounding discourses. Through micro-practices that emerged from their

[5] As Ferguson and Gupta (2002) pointed out, Foucauldian governmentality puts emphasis on its productive dimension. By this, I understand its focus on producing both constraining and enabling effects.

surrounding discourses, these subjects, I will show, how they may come to appropriate and then embody used-to-be others' but now their own interests.[6]

Third, Foucault did not conceptualize intersubjectivity or collectivity of subjects explicitly. In order to conceptualize intersubjectivity of subjects I combine Foucault's notion of the subject with Connolly's idea of *the politics of becoming* (1999).[7] Connolly's idea of becoming, albeit sometimes individualistic, makes it possible to think of a WEP self-help group as a culturally marked *constituency*. Through political movements this constituency is made each time anew by constructing and (re)negotiating a new identity from suffering that is produced by accepting the culture of the dominant. This culturally induced suffering in the context of WEP can be identified as, to name few possibilities that we might find in development discourses, poverty, bad marriages, domestic violence, caste discrimination, envy, disease, stigmatization, rapid social change, alienation and the loss of self-esteem. Connolly argued, and this is the contribution I find valuable, that this construction of new identity is *ethical* insofar as it is a response to suffering.

Fourth, as Radhakrishnan (2003) rightly pointed out, Connolly's politics of becoming does not specify its directionality. Here I draw on an anti-essentialist feminist as well as Marxian analysis of citizenship and democracy offered by Mouffe (1992) which helps us to imagine a direction of becoming and a different notion of empowerment. She elaborated on Marx's understanding of citizenship as "the political community" (Marx,

---

[6] This micro-practice creates and sustains what Gramsci called hegemony that fuses a collective will among different groups of people through ideology. See Mouffe (1979) for a discussion on Gramsci's notions of hegemony and ideology and Kamat (2002) for a discussion of hegemony in the context of development.

[7] I acknowledge some shortcomings in Connolly's politics of becoming as pointed out by Radhakrishnan (2003), such as a missing macro-political factor of the East-West, first world-third world difference, its single-minded attention to suffering and its non-specified directionality (e.g., becoming in what direction?).

1978, p. 43) and defined radical democratic citizenship as "a form of political identity that consists in the identification with the political principles of modern pluralist democracy, namely, the assertion of liberty and equality for all" (Mouffe, 1992, p. 378). She identified its aim to be "the construction of a common political identity that would create the conditions for the establishment of a new hegemony articulated through new egalitarian social relations, practices and institutions" (Mouffe, 1992, p. 380). This is realized without assigning any pre-given identities, thus among other things the a priori sexual division of labor, to its subjects or citizens and proceeds by creating "a chain of equivalence among the different democratic struggles so as to create an equivalent articulation between the demands of women, blacks, workers, gays, and others" (Mouffe, 1992, p. 372). To be sure, by *articulation*, she meant the establishment of historical, contingent and variable links between different subject positions within which social agents are constituted by multiple discourses without being totally fixed, having a necessary relation and eliminating difference. This differs from the liberal individualist notion of citizenship in which individuals are constructed as born free and equal and citizenship is reduced to a merely legal status to promote their self-interests within the constraints that come through the enlightenment of that such as the respect for the rights of others that separates them from others and acting independently from society (Marx, 1978; Mouffe, 1992). It also differs from "group differentiated citizenship" in which particular interests and/or identities are pre-given to a group, such as women or the elderly (Mouffe, 1992, p. 380). As Mouffe insisted, democratic citizenship should be "collective, inclusive, and generalized" (p. 374). Thus, it constructs the citizen as an active participant in a collective endeavor who exercises what Marx (1978) calls "social powers" (p. 46) and differs from liberal individualist and group differentiated citizenship which enables individuals and/or

groups to exercise political power for their own interests, thus, limit their capacity. In addition, it is important to note that her notion of radical democratic citizenship accepts the impossibility of full representation of citizens.[8] There are and will be always some who are excluded from representation and the representation of those included is necessarily incomplete. By recognizing this point, she suggested that issues are not solved by discarding them but only by continuously reformulating them in a manner whose adequacy is assessed through ongoing processes of mutual negotiation.

Fifth, because Foucault's power/knowledge analysis alone provides the framework for the discovery of but does not specify the content of subordinated knowledges, I also deploy an anti-essentialist Marxian analysis of class[9] that recognizes class as a process of performance, appropriation and distribution of surplus[10] rather than actual social groups (e.g., capitalists and workers) or power (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). With its focus on processes of performance, appropriation and distribution of surplus, this articulation of class challenges the capitalocentric tendency of the mainstream development discourses that obscure co-existing noncapitalist class processes, such as feudal, slave, independent and communal, along with those of capitalism (Gibson-

---

[8] By drawing on Lacanian psychoanalytic notion of the real, Mouffe (and Laclau) acknowledged that some part of the subject always escapes any symbolization. I will discuss this point more explicitly in chapter 4.

[9] This anti-essentialist Marxian class analysis has been theorized by Resnick and Wolff (1987) and other scholars affiliated with the Association for Economic and Social Analysis (AESA) that publishes a scholarly journal entitled *Rethinking Marxism*.

[10] According to Marx, a laborer often performs both *necessary* and *surplus* labor. The former is defined as "the quantity of labor time necessary to produce the consumables customarily required by the producer to keep working" and the latter as "the extra time of labor the direct producer performs beyond the necessary labor" (Resnick & Wolff, 1987, p. 115).

Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001).[11] This analysis illuminates one subordinated knowledge —class— and its articulation gestures towards the possibility that other knowledges are repressed by official WEP discourses.[12]

Working with these theoretical tools may make visible some effects of the gentle but irresistible requirement for Third World women subjects to identify in relation to interests articulated for them, to accept them as their own and to act upon themselves as subjectivated through the rules of the discourses from which those interests emerge. I draw on the combination of these analytical tools, as informed by my transnational feminist commitments, to articulate issues emerging in the intersection of adult literacy and other development discourses and I differentiate an imperialistic mode of development from a non-imperialistic, more communal mode of development within existing discourses. My hope is that in drawing attention to these issues I may open up a space for the continual elaboration and pursuit of possibilities that are not visible from the terrain of current discourses of development in order to challenge Development.

The chapter is divided into the following sections. First, I will map the context of global economic restructuring, and feminist debates on Third World women and adult literacy in the context of Nepal's political economy in brief.[13] Second, I will point to

---

[11] Gibson-Graham (1996) has defined capitalocentrism as follows:

> other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism: as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement of capitalism; as existing in capitalism's space or orbit (p. 6).

[12] I have found that the language of class does not exist within the official WEP discourses like Wolff (Wolff, 2003) pointed out that it does not exist within the official World Bank discourses.

[13] What I discuss below is the historical context within which the WEP emerged. Recent events in Nepal may change this context dramatically. The world waits breathless to see

examples of the types of individual management made possible in the exemplar and exemplary Women's Empowerment Program specifically. Third, I will discuss how a new developmentality is manifested in WEP. Fourth, I will proceed by showing how its implementation can be seen to produce contradictory effects from the perspective offered by anti-essentialist Marxian analyses of class and citizenship. In conclusion, I will propose that we need to repeatedly work through the possibilities afforded by alternative discourses in order to expose areas of silence produced by Development.

Brief Background Contexts

After the World War II, "the era of development" was, retrospectively speaking, kicked off by President Truman's inaugural address of January 20, 1949 in which two thirds of the world was labeled "underdeveloped" and the United States declared its savior (Escobar, 1995; Esteva, 1992). Nepal, one of the many newly anointed underdeveloped countries, signed the first aid agreement with the government of the United States in the same year (Pandey, 2000, p. 306). This agreement was motivated in part by the US' interest in fighting the spread of communism in that region through the American educational system and agrarian reform (Bista, 1991, p. 139-40). Despite its National Geographic image of being a Shangri-La and more than half-a-century of concerted development activities, Nepal is still ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world (United Nations Development Programme, 2003). One of the effects of a long history of being marginalized and exploited first by a feudalistic monarchy and the

---

what will unfold in the wake of Maoists sweeping electoral victory in the just concluded elections.

Panchayat system (the Panchayat system was also feudalistic),[14] then after 1990 by a multi-party parliamentary democracy, and then from 2003 the monarchy again, all combined with Western driven imperialistic development, has been the organization by some intellectuals and poor peasants of a "People's War" started in 1996 and modeled on Mao's revolutionary philosophy (Gellner, 2003; Hutt, 2003). Complex social and political changes that include the end of the Cold War, the rise of nuclear and/or economic power in neighboring countries (China, India and Pakistan), and since 2001 the threats of the "People's War" to the Nepali regime being recast as terrorist activities against a "democratic" government (Joshi, 2002) have combined to increase Nepal's profile in U.S. foreign policy.

Moving from the history of Nepal to the discourses of Development, what counts as democracy and freedom to the US government is best identified by examining its material practices within the global restructuring processes where it has been consistently pushing the free market at multiple levels and in multiple locations since 1980s. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s the World Bank and USAID cultivated neocolonial relationships with Third World countries through structural adjustment policies that favored "free trade"[15] (USAID/Nepal, n.d.b; World Bank, 1991), the same institutions during the same period funded microfinance activities on a smaller scale in rural areas

---

[14] King Mahendra instituted this system in January 1961 in which the state unified its country through village, city, district and zonal councils under a party-less parliamentary structure.

[15] Framed by neoclassical economic doctrines, free trade policies are to eliminate any restrictions that prevent individuals from maximizing wealth in the market (D. Ruccio, 1991). For example, USAID/Nepal "assisted" in the privatization of state owned enterprises (USAID/Nepal, n.d.a). However, many feminist researchers have pointed out the devastating consequences of these policies for poor women (Benería & Feldman, 1992; Bergeron, 2004; G. Sen & Grown, 1987; Sparr, 1994).

(Fernando, 1997). Both are done in the name of democratization and freedom, where the latter in particular, means cultivating the conditions necessary for individuals to be self-seeking in a commodity based (not necessarily but often read as capitalist) economic system (Sanyal, 1993). Along with and maybe complementing this neoliberal trend, a few successful microfinance programs focusing on poor Third World women (such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) have been celebrated with near religious fervor. These have become models and have been replicated, sometimes with adaptations thought appropriate for local needs and conditions, in Nepal[16] and in many different parts of the World including the US (Ehlers & Main, 1998; Schereiner & Woller, 2003).

Postcolonial feminist scholars, such as Mohanty (1991b), Ong (1994), Trinh (1989), and Spivak (1988b), are critical of the ways in which liberal modernization and/or leftist underdevelopment discourses, and in particular Western feminist discourses, represent Third World women. These authors have shown that Western feminist discourses, including those concerned with development, often represent Third World women homogeneously and in so doing deny the agency, heterogeneity and subjecthood of Third World women. For example, Mohanty (1991b) argued that binaries, such as uneducated/educated and modern/tradition-bound, are socially as well as relationally constructed in specific contexts. One of her critiques is that Western feminist researchers often represented Third World women as marked, inferior objects/subjects outside of their embedded social relations by externalizing the knowers' positions. That is, those Western feminist authors were constituted as unmarked, superior subjects in relation to

[16] Since 1992 the Nepalese government has set up the Grameen Bikas Bank modeled after the Grameen Bank in rural areas and there are also a few Nepalese NGOs which have replicated the Grameen Bank's methodology in their credit operation (Bhatta, 2001).

their construction of Third World women. In this arrangement, the centrality of the First World knower in constituting the Other is obscured and the ability of Third World women to know is denied or underrated through an act that Spivak (1988b) has identified as "epistemic violence."

Along with and maybe because of critiques of these images of Third World women as homogeneously ignorant or victims, feminists of various persuasions, partly influenced by postcolonial feminism, and other scholars/practitioners within and outside of development discourses, have produced changes. Shifts in representation of Third World women from passive objects of development to active economic and political agents can be traced to the effects of Boserup's influential book entitled *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (1970) and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) set up in 1979 during the UN Decade for Women (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2003) respectively. Accepting the neoclassical economic doctrine, Boserup claimed that Third World women, still understood as a homogeneous group, can be competitive economic agents once they are educated to participate in economic activity. Reflecting its roots in Western liberal feminism CEDAW, recognized as the most comprehensive international legal instrument binding signatory states (Moser, 1993, p. 143), claimed that women (recognized as political agents) should enjoy equal rights to men in all areas of life.[17] In addition, the world conferences on women and human rights and growing feminist

[17] CEDAW has been ratified by 185 countries, over ninety percent of the UN member states (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2008). While Nepal ratified CEDAW in 1990 the year of the revival of multiple-party democracy, Luintel (2001) charged that the Nepali government has not realized this in practice through the example of differential property rights for women. The US remains the only developed country that has not ratified CEDAW as of June 30, 2008.

advocacy across nations supported the mainstreaming of gender analysis within development (Razavi & Miller, 1995). This gender mainstreaming effort, in conjunction with those efforts that converged in and emanated from the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995, has enabled major development institutions to deploy gender analysis in all levels of activity and to move women to a central position in community development activities that often involve income generation and legal rights and advocacy.

As a result of these efforts and in conjunction with other social processes, such as those stated above, women objects/subjects of development began to be represented not only as social reproducers but also as potential economic producers and political actors. While the economistic, efficiency driven approach was once thought of as opposed to the holistic empowerment approach recognized as development by the Development Alternatives of Women for New Era (DAWN)[18] (Moser, 1993), within the intersection of neoliberalism and Western liberal feminist inspired development discourses, the line between the two approaches has blurred. Important aspects of the empowerment approach, such as challenging intersecting multiple oppressions including caste and capitalist exploitation in a local/global context (G. Sen & Grown, 1987), have been replaced with the goal of becoming a liberal constituency of self-seeking individuals in a

[18] Critics of mainstream discourses of women, gender and development often trace their roots to DAWN. DAWN was born before the third world conference on women in Nairobi in 1985 among activists, researchers, and policy makers who were committed to developing alternative frameworks and methods to achieve the goals of economic and social justice, peace and development free from all forms of oppression from perspectives of poor women in the Third World (G. Sen & Grown, 1987). However, I acknowledge that empowerment discourses have existed in the US since at least 1960s (Cruikshank, 1999) in the climax of the Civil Rights Movement and rise of the second wave of women's movements.

commodity exchange based and bourgeois law governed political and economic system. In this new neoliberal empowerment it is accepted that both economic efficiency and political awareness in a liberal sense are necessary for empowering (non/semi-literate) poor Third World women (USAID/Nepal, n.d.a).

Within adult literacy discourses the effects of shifts in the representation of non-literate Third World women can be found in (often post-) literacy training that focus on issues such as income-generation and/or human rights for economically and/or politically empowering poor "illiterate" Third World women. Since the late 1970s the functional literacy model, as partly supported by directed development spending, gradually shifted its focus from general "illiterate" people (read: men) to engage more with women through the integration of WID analyses. Freirean approaches to literacy training became influential in enabling "illiterate" women to function more effectively as mothers, wives, workers and political actors thus citizens in communities.[19] Although Freire's philosophy was subversive (Freire, 1970), like DAWN's empowerment, it has been domesticated by its articulation within global/local ideologies, such as developmentalism[20] and neoliberalism and social relations of gender and caste, to the point that it may have an effect of integrating women into monolithically subordinate roles instead of transforming them.[21] For example, Robinson-Pant's ethnographic research in Nepal (2000) revealed that the women participants in an adult literacy class

[19] The Nepalese national literacy campaign curriculum, *Naya Goreto* (New Trail), is a good example of this trend.

[20] The mainstream development ideology that views development as linear teleological processes based on Western capitalist industrialization model (Esteva, 1992; McMichael, 2000; Michael Watts, 1995).

[21] One of the reasons for this is that the Nepali literacy campaign has adopted a primer-based approach that decontextualizes both literacy and women. See Sato (2004) for detailed discussion.

preferred a hierarchical teacher-student relationship that was practiced in a local formal school because formal schooling was more valued by the local people including the participants themselves. Education in this context was understood as a strategy to enable women to function more efficiently in their existing gendered daily lives while it was expressed as empowering by the development workers. By way of another example, Stromquist (1997, 1999) pointed out that skills sought by women participants in educational programs are often gendered and roles assigned to women depicted in adult literacy primers are also often gendered. She cautions that while such literacy training can precipitate change, it can also be used to reproduce existing gendered practices. Thus, absent critical engagement, both Robinson-Pant and Stromquist argued that the gendered images offered by adult literacy training can reinforce traditional gendered identities.

Such critiques have in part motivated the creation of new approaches, such as ActionAid's REFLECT (Regenerating Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) and the Community Literacy approach.[22] Both approaches use the New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Barton et al., 2000; Baynham, 1995; Gee, 1990; Robinson-Pant, 2001; Street, 1984, 1995, 2001) as their core theoretical framework and REFLECT in particular explicitly draws on the Gender and Development (GAD) framework. Both approaches, without using standardized primers, acknowledge literacy learners as active subjects who are capable of producing knowledge and engage multiple literacies. Based on these acknowledgements, these approaches are more grounded in local contexts, more participatory and more

[22] By this I mean that the approach developed by the Community Literacy Project Nepal (CLPN).

process-oriented. For example, REFLECT adopts Participatory Rural Appraisal's (PRA) methods in combination with Freirean methodology to investigate learners' context specific daily issues with special reference to gender issues (Archer & Cottingham, 1996). The Community Literacy approach, on the other hand, advocates *social uses of literacy* in the community at all levels (Chitraker & Hodge, 1999; Hodge, 1997; Hodge & Hudson, 2000) rather than creating an artificial literacy learning environment and it promotes greater access to not only written but also oral information. It uses a variety of methods to do this: for example, it uses existing literacy texts that learners engage in their daily lives as learning materials, helps to make existing community wall newspapers more reader-friendly and it has supported the building of community radio so that non-literate people can access information (L. Sen, 2000). However, at a theoretical level and in practice both the REFLECT and the Community Literacy approaches implicitly assume that learners' needs and interests come from the learners themselves, thus they carry a humanist assumption common to mainstream development discourses, that these subjects are autonomous agents formed prior to discourse, albeit in a different degree, rather than asking how those subjects are formed in and through embedded power-laden relations including those with the implementing organizations. For example, by using PRA, REFLECT may limit the topics and structure of discussion, and consequentially, may produce knowledge and actions on terms specified by the donor (Rogers, 1997). In terms of the Community Literacy approach, the staff members appear to be unaware of how they influence learners' possible responses in their official documents (Sato, 2004). In addition, due in part to difficulties of implementation and evaluation, cost-effectiveness and scaling-up (Saldanha *et al.*, 2000; Williams, 2000), and romanticization of local knowledge (Fiedrich, 1996, December) within the mainstream humanist development

discourses, these approaches can be read as manipulative in that their often female subjects are led to pursue goals that they come to think properly theirs.

Within adult literacy discourses the use of the terms, legal literacy and income generation have become popular since the early-mid 90s. Although income-generation and legal literacy training have been integrated into post-literacy material,[23] the critical shift in Nepalese adult literacy discourses occurred in the mid/late 90s when many social processes, including global neoliberal economic restructuring, Maoist insurgency, growing feminist advocacy and successful microfinance activities for Third World women, coincided to produce programs like the Women's Empowerment Program. The Education for All campaign instigated in 1990[24] by international development institutions and still rhetorically dominant despite wavering in practice,[25] supported this shift in Nepal where the literacy rate, especially the female literacy rate, was quite low.[26] Additionally, post-literacy training that provides more practical oriented training was critiqued because (1) it assumes that learners are only capable of engaging more practical training when they acquire text-oriented literacy skills and adult learners are thought to

---

[23] Women's Economic Empowerment and Literacy (WEEL) training developed by the World Education Nepal for example. The World Education Nepal also developed a post-literacy primer called *Diyalo* (light) that contains some topics related to legal rights, such as land and marriage.

[24] The World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990 in which delegates from 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organizations agreed to universalize primary education and massively reduce "illiteracy" before the end of the decade (UNESCO, 2001).

[25] Some critics argued that this was partly due to Helen Abadzi's report for the World Bank that examined cost-effectiveness of adult literacy training in comparison with that of primary education (Abadzi, 1994).

[26] Although all statistics need to be approached with caution, some are instructive. The national adult literacy rate (literacy rate above 15 years old) was 42.9% in 2001: the male adult literacy rate was 60.5% while the female adult literacy rate was 25.2%(United Nations Development Programme, 2003).

learn literacy skills better by using them (Rogers, 1994); (2) it was expensive and time-consuming (Cheston & Khun, 2002); and (3) microfinance for poor Third World women became an imperative strategy for their empowerment within community development discourses (Fernando, 1997).

Through these overdetermining social processes, adult literacy training in combination with microfinance and legal advocacy training have become integral components in empowerment training programs for poor non/semi-literate Third World women in Nepal. The USAID funded Women's Empowerment Program (1998—2001) is a good example of this trend. The goal was economic and political empowerment of (non/semi-literate) Nepalese women through adult literacy training. It was carried out by two US based INGOs. Women's empowerment was defined within a humanist framework without considering structural inequalities as "the ability of women to make choices to improve their well-being and that of their families and communities" (USAID/Nepal, n.d.a). Women's literacy, economic participation and legal advocacy, were identified as the main interventions, and integrated into two approaches. The first was *Women in Business* (WIB) that was developed as a four primer based curriculum for economic empowerment that self-taught groups of women how to do microfinance coupled with appropriate basic literacy skills.[27] The other was a more structured, primer based five days a week, six month training called the *Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy* (RR&A) that was intended to teach WEP "clients" their legal rights and responsibilities and ways to engage in collective advocacy in support of almost entirely prescribed social

[27] The titles of the four primers are *Our Group, Forming Our Village Bank, Village Bank Lending* and *Village Bank Entrepreneur.*

changes.[28] Poor non/semi-literate Nepali women were largely represented as producing empowered political and economic subjects.

Before I begin to discuss some specific technologies used to produce self/group-governing subjects in the next section, I will briefly describe the demographic context. Prior to WEP's arrival in December 1997/January 1998 in 21 out of 75 districts in the southern plain region of Nepal called Terai, USAID/Nepal funded different INGOs to implement adult literacy, microfinance and legal advocacy activities independently. WEP was developed to organize the implementation of these "first generation" activities (Thomas & Shrestha, 1998, December) in a more "efficient" and "effective" manner (Pact/Nepal, 1999, June) and to strengthen the outcomes of those activities without creating dependency (Odell, 1998, December). Contrary to the oft-assumed focus of community development activities on serving the poorest of the poor, WEP officially targeted "rural" women (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 7). Only 45% of the "clients," about 125,000, were what would officially be considered to be poor. In the context of Nepal, where per capita income was US$210 per year at the time of WEP, people were identified as poor if their income was less than $75 per year and if they owned neither land nor dwelling. Most often these people spoke a language other than Nepali and had never been to school (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 48). Of these poor, several thousand (not specified) were former *Kamaiyas* (bonded laborers) who were recently released from generations of permanent debt servitude (Jeffery Ashe, 2000).

[28] While the image presented in the mainstream discourse is quite similar, this type of collective advocacy, I would argue, differs from those movements by Third World women (i.e., against structural adjustment programs) in terms of its effectivity in destabilizing or consolidating developmentality.

Twenty one to 36 percent of participating rural women[29] were considered literate[30] at project start-up (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 15; Pact/Nepal, 2000, November) and those who were considered literate were most likely upper caste (Brahmins and Chetris) (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 45; Pact/Nepal, 2000, April, p. 17). Having briefly described the demographic background, I will now take up some examples of types of individual management practices deployed within the WEP in order to examine how WEP created an environment in which its participants came to discipline themselves.[31]

Technologies of Development

In order to make it more sustainable and more efficient, WEP deployedwhat I call technologies of gendered, economistic and group-differentiated solidarity. That solidarity was enacted through women only self-help groups, in which they were represented as gendered subjects, such as mothers and wives, whose gendered subjectivities are pre-given and objectives were built around economic activities understood to be undertaken first for their families' and then their communities' welfare. These groups were called "economic groups" under WEP. Numerous investigations have supported this move to a women only solidarity group approach with an economic focus.

---

[29] Only 14% of rural women were estimated as literate in Nepal at the time of WEP so that it can be said that WEP worked with women who were relatively more literate than the average.

[30] People who can read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her daily life and make simple arithmetic calculations are considered as literate by the common UN standard.

[31] The analysis in this section is based mainly on the textual analysis of official WEP documents, such as the primers, reports, and materials available online, and is supported by several interviews with the two experts involved in the curriculum development of WEP and an outside researcher who had interviewed some of the WEP recipients. These interviews were done between fall 2002 and spring 2003.

This approach built on lessons from the field and maintained the assumption that all women participants share common characteristics. Women, for example,were thought to be intimidated by men's presence (Ballara, 1992) so men were excluded, and women were thought to use their earned money more for their families' welfare and to return borrowed money more reliably than do men (Kabeer, 1994). Further, these programs were thought to do better if they were grafted onto interests of an existing group (Rogers, 1994). However, WEP differed from other similar programs in that these self-help groups were officially required to have a *pre-existing* economic function as a condition for their participation in the program and that they were not then "presently linked to microfinance intermediaries" (Nandy from USAID/Nepal as cited in Lassen, n.d., p. 12). In a good portion of the areas where this program took place these informal groups, called *Dhukuti*,[32] had the specific economic function of supporting savings and credit activities (Bhatta, 2001).[33] Members of *Dhukuti* are supposed to contribute to a collective fund monthly, and a *Dhukuti* functions in a way very similar to an economic group of WEP, such as meeting regularly, choosing a leader, creating accountability among groups, managing money and keeping records (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 15-6). With this framing, the door to this program was opened only to a specific category of "rural women": women who had formed economic self-help groups prior to the arrival of WEP (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October).

Although the official discourse of WEP, with the notable exception of the evaluation done by two external evaluators, does not discuss this crucial point at all, one

---

[32] See Rankin (1996) who examined this function in a Newar community in Nepal as an example.

[33] According to Ashe and Parrot (2001, October) this type of informal lending mechanisms has been practiced for at least 1,200 years in Nepal (p. 57).

of the stated key contributors for the success of WEP was a strong cultural and economic tradition of *Dhukuti* within some of the target communities (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October). In the case where existing groups did not exist, groups were "pulled together quickly in anticipation of funding from WEP" (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 31) with help of subcontracted local NGOs.[34] These "partner" local NGOs, run dominantly by upper caste local male elites in given communities, preferred these "quickly pulled together" groups because these newly constituted women's groups were easier to find (increasing the number of "clients") and were thought to be easier to manipulate (expert, personal communication, April 12, 2003). These newly formed groups were set to go through the first primer of four called, *Our Group*, which carefully sets out to help members to learn benefits of forming a group that has a saving function (ECTA, 1999).[35] For example, one comic story in the primer represents different consequences of two poor women joining and not joining a savings group. The woman who joins the group ends up bringing money into her family as an independent commodity producer in the market while the other who does not join a saving group remains poor and comes to understand the importance of a saving group. By actively grafting onto a pre-existing cultural and economic structure (i.e. *Dhukuti*) or externally creating one in a context where cultural precedents facilitated their formation, WEP seems to have ensured that the economic groups had or would have a common goal —

[34] WEP trained 240 local NGOs, cooperatives and microfinance institutions that supervised the economic groups based on the premise that those smaller local NGOs work better, "particularly in terms of cost," than the larger NGOs from Kathmandu (1999, June, p. 5). These NGOs are now called "operational NGOs" whose functions are mainly technical and functional management (Kamat, 2003).

[35] Some of those who had already formed self-help groups and had basic literacy skills skipped this first primer.

savings and credit potentially first for their families' and then for their communities' welfare-- that would foster a sustainable, albeit economistic, gendered group solidarity that somehow fitted within the interests of WEP. Thus, the interests of WEP were represented not as imposed on the WEP subjects. Rather, these women (understood essentially) were thought of as self/group-selecting for the program based on their used-to-be pre-existing and now educated tastes, a perspective that overlooks the support of local gendered, caste/religious/class ideologies within a humanist epistemology.

However, as Cruikshank (1999) insists, "self-help" does not mean that those autonomous subjects come together to help one another voluntarily on the subjects' terms. Rather, self-help, in the context of WEP, was thought of as an "efficient" and "effective" set of technologies whose enacting would strengthen existing or create new relations as mutual aid among poor Third World women whose product is building sustainable local political and economic institutions. This set of technologies, which "reduc[ed] the cost of delivery" of the donor (Pact/Nepal, 1999, June, p. 5) in given communities from within, is recognized as a benefit within the economism of neoliberal development.[36] For example, in the context of an existing economic group, the rule, like that found in other microfinance projects, that repayment is secured through mutual assurance, may have existed prior to WEP's arrival. They may have, in other words, internalized and institutionalized technologies of self-surveillance by accepting to be constituted through existing social relations, such as caste, gender and class in exchange for obtaining a somewhat secure location within pre-existing social orders. Under the

[36] According to Ashe and Parrot (n.d.) WEP did not take a new group model because it would have required much more training. Within this particular framework, this can be read as cost-effective.

internalized gaze of their local authorities and/or group members, these women may have become conscious of their economic activities even without their other's being physically present. This may be seen as somewhat similar to the effects of the "panopticon" that effectively regulates and disciplines those who internalize their visibility (Foucault, 1979). Yet, what differentiates this from the panopticon effect is that the technology of mutual assurance actively depends not only on individuals' visibility to their Other, but also on social mutual obligations, such as *ijjat* (family honor) (Silwal, 2002) and/or other endogenous in-group phenomena,[37] and lacks a centralized gaze. Thus, subjectivation that is recognized as appropriate within neoliberal development discourse relies on partial appropriations of rationalities (and their power relations) external to the development apparatus. This point came to be recognized as a "'missing link' of development" (World Bank as cited in Bergeron, 2003, p. 401) in the mid to late 1990s and was intensively studied insofar as it was made visible through the lens afforded by the notion of "social capital" (Bergeron, 2003; Rankin, 2002).

One of the most innovative sets of technologies WEP deployed is associated with the substitution of a literacy led approach to microfinance for the more popular credit-led approaches, such as the Grameen Bank, that do not provide education. In the context of adult literacy training, there used to be a divide between basic literacy and post literacy training. Individuals needed to take basic literacy training in order to take post literacy training whose curriculum, such as health, forestry, human rights and microfinance, often was what motivated them to participate in the basic literacy training in the first place. There have been many critiques that have concluded that it is expensive and time

[37] The work done by Fernando (1997) and Rankin (1996) also have demonstrated this point.

consuming to run both basic and post literacy training(USAID/Nepal, 2002, December). In order to make it more "efficient" and "effective," WIB employed a technology of production that combines the basic and post components in a single "cost-effective" training with a specific focus on group formation, saving, credit and entrepreneurslip.

In combination with this all-in-one economistic adult literacy training WEP deployed the then innovative development of a saving-led approach to microfinance. As noted above, this innovation was implicitly based on their knowledge of the existence of *Dhukuti* in their "target" communities whose purposes were compatible with those of WEP: saving and credit. Building on this quietly acknowledged foundation, WEP did not provide any seed funds and WEP further reduced their expenses by requiring its subjects to provide lanterns, fuel, necessary stationery and to buy the workbooks(Jeffery Ashe, 2000, p. 6).

Although every possible expense was minimized, adult literacy training, which is still considered pricey and time-consuming, was implemented in the case of WEP since it was thought of as necessary in order to "modernize" existing saving and credit activities of *Dhukuti* (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October). Non/semi-literate members were found to use their collective fund for "unproductive" activities, such as funerals, marriages and household expenses (Pact, 2000, p. 7). Acting on the modernist deficit-driven empowerment discourses that semi/non-literate female *Dhukuti* members cannot function "productively" and "politically," WEP women members were seen as requiring *particular* economic and legal skills, values and attitudes through structured literacy training, in order to be "successful" political and economic subjects as articulated within an intersection of *particular* discourses. By way of an example of its "modernization" agenda, the first WIB primer (ECTA, 1999) specifies that WEP subjects are to use their loan

strictly for "productive" uses[38] and in order to do so, it strongly encourages them to start a "business" which, according to the primer, is "individually" generating "profits" by engaging in commodity exchange in the market. The primer strictly prohibits the subjects from using their loan for uses deemed "unproductive." It suggests that they use the money they voluntarily saved for non-productive use. It demands that they deposit some portion of their earnings into the collective saving pot on the weekly "banking day" and suggests that the groups deposit their savings in a commercial bank in town when they get a large amount (as specified in the first lesson in Pact, 1999). In the sixth lesson of the second primer these women are taught how to use six different documents[39] to keep their financial records. Further, in order to prevent high rates of drop-out and default, WIB primers encourage (or require) the groups to institute strict rules, such as fines for not saving and for missing a meeting.

While the practices just mentioned may have facilitated particular ways of "modernizing" existing economic activities on the terms articulated by WEP, the same processes seems to have produced constraining or contradictory effects. First, while WEP delivered these seemingly coercive demands through short stories, role-plays and binary questions with vivid pictures in which the WEP subjects were represented as active economic actors, their possibilities were delimited by the laws of a particular discourse. Drawing on Kabeer's discussion of the Grameen Bank, Biewener (2001) discussed the ways in which the Grameen Bank started lending to finance what is usually considered to

---

[38] This productivity is defined in a capitalocentric sense by appropriative and distributive processes of surplus primarily to investments in productive capital.

[39] They are the savings passbook, cash control sheet, savings journal, summary transaction sheet, financial statement and balance sheet. Not all women are asked to fill out all six documents.

be "unproductive" activities, such as women's unpaid labor in non-market oriented commodity production, and read this move as indicative of possibilities for broadening what traditionally constitutes productivity. In the case of WEP, however, one newspaper article indicated that the newer economic groups tended to follow the rules more strictly (Silwal, 2002). The use of the fixed primers, particularly for the newer groups (along with possible power relations with the local NGOs), may have limited possibilities for these alternative resignifications of productivity to emerge. Second, the requirement that participants use six different forms in order to keep track of their funds was recognized as efficient. To sum up, it can be said that WEP produced effects that had "modernizing" moments that were recognized and taken up within official documents but also moments that, were they not overlooked, would be seen as constraining and contradictory.

The modernization agenda that was partly based on the deficit-driven empowerment discourses also characterized the Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy training (RR&A). A good example can be found in one section of the RR&A primer (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May) under the theme called income-generation which asks the WEP subjects the following question: "What are the factors that usually prevent women from starting a business?" and guides them to check "the appropriate boxes" (p. 162) next to which are listed:

> Lack of skills
> Lack of support from husband/family
> Lack of time
> Lack of resources
> Lack of adequate knowledge and experience to make a decision regarding what type of business to undertake (p. 162)

Then, the primer goes on to ask them the four "important things" to consider when selecting an income-generating activity. Those four things are:

1. Personal skills and abilities
2. Resources at your disposal[40]
3. Demand for the product or service you plan to invest in
4. Support facilities available e.g. if you are interested in livestock-raising, support facilities like veterinary services are necessary. Otherwise, it becomes a very risky business (p. 163)

Through practicing the carefully structured WEP curriculum (including short stories, role-plays, binary questions and homework), these women subjects were presented with the foregone conclusion that they wished to start a business, encouraged to recognize that their failure to start a business is attributable to what they lack, to identify this lack within their local conditions (as opposed to global politico-economic structures), and to recognize that the skills and resources needed to start their own business were to be found in their participation in the program. Through this process they may have become subjected to and subjects of neoliberal empowerment discourses whose form suppresses recognition of their dependence on local social relations and their articulation within global relations.

Furthermore, these WEP subjects may have not only come to identify what they lack but also come to fill their lacks with those knowledges and skills that were presented by WEP as the solution to their lacks. In many of the examples offered in the RR&A primer when a woman encounters difficulty, such as domestic violence, bigamy, child marriage, and dowry harassment, the solution is to be found first in consulting with the WEP group and, second, either in income generating activities or in collective actions or both. By way of example, under the theme of marriage, the primer touches issues around

[40] It is important to note that this section comes after two-weeks of studying what property they have at their disposal.

dowry,[41] such as forcible demanding and harassment (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May, p. 125-7). It first states that dowry is optional under the constitution and lists the ways in which one is punished when one violates these laws before it suggests particular procedures to file one's compliant. The role-play scenario depicts a story in which a WEP group is to help a woman who is suffering from dowry demanding by her mother-in-law and proposes the solution of the group going to the local government office on her behalf.

The WEP interventions did not stop at identifying what WEP women subjects lack and solutions to the lack. The RR&A primer takes a further step and suggests that these women challenge practices that are seemingly inconsistent with post-development critiques that draw on Foucault's governmentality in which state domination is understood to be normalized through microfinance. Using the same story described above as an example, the group is thought of as instrumental in the education of a male local government officer who first rejects their request due to his ignorance of the fact that the local government is responsible for helping the women who suffers from dowry harassment under the law. The lesson ends with the main learning point in a box: "It is illegal to demand excess dowry and/or harass for it. An economic group can and should help those who are harassed for dowry" (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May, p. 127). Here the state, embodied by the local government officer, is represented as an ignorant pre-modern patriarchal figure whose failure to embody the role assigned him by the current developmentality blocks these women (as a group) from the liberation that is their due and who, therefore, needs to be educated by the newly educated WEP subjects. This

[41] Dowry (*daijo*) is defined as "money, ornaments and/or other material things like furniture, land, cattle, etc. that are given to the bride and/or groom's family on or after marriage" (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May, p. 126).

role play can be seen as enabling the WEP subjects to recognize dowry demanding and harassing as illegal and to exercise their political power upon themselves as citizens not only to secure their rights but also to challenge the failures of the agents of local institutions fully to embody their assigned roles insofar as those failures undermine their rights as given by the law.

Moreover, WEP carefully guided the subjects not only to challenge and modify what it identifies as failures of institutional practice on its terms but also to reconstitute the law in a manner consistent with a particular WEP informed Western liberal bourgeois notion of rights and citizenship if appropriate. For example, while the primer strongly suggests that WEP subjects obey some gendered laws, such as property law,[42] which privilege men over women (Luintel, 2001; Rankin, 2001), it suggests that they change other laws, such as that which recognizes bigamous marriage as valid, through, and here is the recurring theme, gendered group-based awareness and advocacy (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May, p. 106-8). Thus, working within the antagonistic relations of citizenship discourses between historically and culturally specific nationalism and Western informed neoliberalism, WEP can be seen as making political and economic citizens whose values occasionally (and conveniently) go beyond those framed by the traditionally understood gendered nationalism. Although the number of political activities engaged by WEP groups fell with the decrease in support from local NGOs after the termination of funding (expert, personal communication, April 12, 2003), some political campaigns, such as those concerned with violence against women, alcohol and gambling, girls education

[42] Although the Nepali constitution allows unmarried women over age 35 to declare their right to take inheritance from their fathers, these women who do so often lose material support and are excluded from their male families (Luintel, 2001; Rankin, 1996).

(Odell, 2000, August) or repairing roads (Pact, 2002b), were celebrated as evidence of successful outcomes of WEP within the official discourse. In these cases, those women can be seen as undertaking a particular political subjectivity, that of embodying and acting on the newly learned liberal Western modernization inflected bourgeois ideology. By subjectivating themselves through the gendered bourgeois laws, for example, the women are, in fact, not liberated from violence: they receive the liberty to recognize and take political actions against domestic violence within the limits permitted by the laws(Marx, 1978) while losing the ability to see the injustice of their location in power relations of Development. In other words, while the women gained a particular political agency this agency was sharply delimited.

What should not be missed in the discussion above is that the WEP subjects who learn the values and skills suggested by WEP curriculum inscribe and thus reproduce the bourgeois law represented in the WEP curriculum on and through their bodies. To be sure, the bourgeois law emphasizes equality, freedom, property, privacy etc. and obscures historically and culturally developed inequitable social relations, such as those of local and limited understandings of gender, caste and class. Instead of constructing its subjects as self-interested bourgeois citizens who individually enjoy equality, freedom, property and privacy within the limits of the law that separates individuals from the community without considering historically and culturally constructed specificities as Marx (1978) argues in his article entitled "On the Jewish Question," WEP constructs its subjects in and through gendered group-differentiated relations as mothers and/or wives within their households and self-help groups to politically act on its terms. In other words, it subjectivates them as abstract yet gendered group-differentiated "citizens" of a state that does not provide an appropriate infrastructural support as the guarantor of their rights

(Lowe, 1996; Marx, 1978). Thus, the women, by being bound by the terms of an equivocating state while identifying themselves as empowered through politically acting on the terms first reconfigured by WEP, may become citizens of what Spivak (1998) calls "a dead-end world" (p. 342).

How is it that the WEP subjects come to be citizens of "a dead-end world"? I argue it is the context specific technologies of the self defined by Foucault (Foucault, 1997 [1982]) broadly as the mechanisms by which subjects exercise power upon themselves of their own will in order to attain certain happiness. By modifying Foucault's definition of technologies of the self, I would also add *technologies of the self-help group*, that can be defined as the mechanisms by which the self-help group exercises collective power upon itself of its own collective will in order to attain certain happiness collectively. Every section of its primers seems to intend the WEP subjects to develop certain technologies of the self and/or the self-help group. For example, the WIB primers carefully guide the WEP subjects to identify the good in pre-scribed binaries and to identify the "responsibilities" and "qualities" each member was expected to have in order to be good within the WEP. The fifth lesson of the second primer of WIB (Pact, 1999) that focuses on qualities of members defines quality as "a virtue, a good behavior or good habit" and shortcomings as "something you can try to improve" (p. 62). The primer suggests that some participants read aloud the words and their given definitions, and then guides them to match "quality" and "shortcoming" with 16 given phrases, such as "truthfulness," "backbiting," "able to keep records" and "caste discrimination" (Ibid.). Technologies of the self and the self-help group would be exercised by the women's constant subjection to a particular set of rules through their bodily practices, such as attending classes, reading aloud the given definitions and matching "quality" with "able to keep records" while they become

constituted by the good qualities represented within this particular discourse. Despite contradictory effects it is seen to have produced, WEP may have enabled its subjects to experience some sort of happiness individually and collectively by counting money, observing the growth of their savings and fomenting public demonstrations in order to ban a local liquor store.

Through the carefully structured pedagogical processes of this literacy-led approach to microfinance in combination with legal rights focused training, women would have become constituted through similar social values, which were first imposed by the Other, by subjecting themselves individually and collectively to what was represented as good. In so doing, they may have internalized the gaze of the Other, a practice which recodes their experience and introduces what they come to accept that they lack. Spivak (1988a) argued that this internalizing of the gaze of the Other enables women to enjoy becoming someone. For example, the women participants in the self-help group may learn how to govern themselves by internalizing the gaze of the Other and come to enjoy that self/group-governance as it becomes understood as the path to becoming someone, the necessarily unrealizable ideal self/group-image as mothers, wives, and/or entrepreneurs, constructed through contingent intersections of their surrounding discourses. In so doing, these women subjects would be subjected to and subjects of the constantly shifting developmentality, and this act of subjectivation can be seen as "ethical" or moral within an embedded social context (Spivak, 1998). I would argue that this individual and group differentiated pleasure of subjectivation whose structural model is the family and the self-help group is often read as empowerment within the mainstream development discourses and that this reading is partial.

An example of the consequences of this partiality can be found in the requirement for self-tutoring. In addition to the already groundbreaking innovative saving-led approach through economistic adult literacy training with no seed funds, WEP employed the technology of self-tutoring in its WIB training. This required there to be at least one member in each economic group who was able to teach the literacy skills presented in the curriculum and, if there was no one, members were required to find and secure a literate volunteer from their community.[43] This technology was developed because there have been a number of problems around instructors within adult literacy programs; such as the cost of instructor training (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October); instructors from outside of the community's tendency to drop out; outsider instructors' tendency not to share interests with other members of the group and so on. Thus, employing insider instructors was thought to be able to more successfully maintain members' solidarity around their goals and interests and to be more economically efficient. By taking this approach, WEP had fewer dropouts and saved money that enabled it to engage a larger number of clients within a limited time (Ibid.). However, being literate as a woman in rural Nepal often indicates economic and/or cultural (higher caste Brahmins and Chetris) privilege. An evaluation study indicates that WEP enlisted these upper caste better-off women to take a role of teaching literacy skills to other members (Pact/Nepal, 2000, April) and that these upper caste better-off women were twice as likely to serve as group officers (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 47). Furthermore, by taking the saving-led approach to microfinance WEP could officially "target" not poor women but rural women (Ibid.).

[43] Local NGOs who acted as intermediate institutions between WEP groups and the two implementing INGOs were often constituted by male local elites (upper caste and politically active) so it might have been easier for them to assist these women to find a literate volunteer in order to secure conditions of existence of their NGOs.

More than half of those who were able to participate in WEP were those who had some resources and the social networks to support the saving practices required to participate in the program (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October). Based on these statements, speculatively speaking, this technology of self-tutoring might have excluded those who were non-literate, lower caste and economically poorer or put them in a subordinate position within a group if, indeed, these less privileged people could even participate. This speculation is supported by the comment made by one of my interviewees that WEP was not intended to serve the poorest of the poor. Thus, it may have widened disparities between the better off and the poor in the "target" communities and fostered "uneven development" while strengthening the better off. While effectiveness appears to be one of the main goals of WEP, this effectiveness seems to have been constituted mainly if not entirely on WEP's terms. Acknowledgement of the strength of a group, such as having capacities to save and teach given literacy skills within a group, produced paradoxical effects: being more effective and efficient on WEP's terms at the unacknowledged expense of less effectively reaching out to the poor.

In anticipating its withdrawal from the field WEP deployed what I call a gendered liberal instrumental constituency of becoming. This constituency seems to be *gendered* because only women, whose identities are pre-given (or made) as women, mothers and members, are recognized as political actors thus citizens, *liberal* in a sense that its citizens are constituted as self-/group-interested political actors who are subjectivated through obeying the bourgeois law working *instrumentally* to re/produce a context-specific developmentality and *becoming* because its citizens are constructed as suffering (e.g., lacking), and they are always constructing a new identity that partially connects one another through always shifting visceral registers as ethical insofar as it is a response to

culturally induced suffering. It is, albeit producing paradoxical effects, designed to sustain and transform the developmentality that constitutes WEP by operating across groups and extending into the larger community. In order to create the sustainable constituency whose characteristics are mentioned above WEP continuously developed a number of technologies. Some of them are the following.

First, WEP deployed women to women networking technologies with different groups and on different levels. One technology developed for networking was temporary women "Empowerment Workers" who were hired by local NGOs to undertake the program monitoring of economic groups' activities regularly in the first trimester of the program (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October).[44] While this networking technology between the program and the economic groups does not appear to be new, what was innovative is that WEP reduced the cost of delivery by training much less expensive local women and enabled them to monitor the economic groups regularly in a functional and managerial way. Second, another innovative technology of networking instituted was called "mobile workshops" in which two leaders of 10 economic groups went to training and shared experiences monthly (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 30). Third, in addition to this, technologies were instituted for groups to take turns to visit and learn from other WEP groups and to collaboratively organize either a campaign or project (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October). Fourth, "men's meeting" and "family days"[45] in

---

[44] Training these locally hired women Empowerment Workers by the better-trained, yet costly WEP staff was thought to greatly reduce costs (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 19).

[45] Women members of economic groups took the following Rights, Responsibilities and Advocacy training (RR&A) and learned the importance, purpose of family gathering and how to organize it in the second week of its training. The primer puts emphasis on the importance of sharing the benefits women earn with the members of family and

which members presented their group as well as personal accomplishments (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October, p. 41) that were set up to "demystify" women's groups' activities and "dissolve" reluctance in and around their families toward their more active economic and political roles in WEP (Thomas & Shrestha, 1998, December, p. 5). These externally instituted women to women networking technologies were based on pre-given identity of women and intended to enable self-help groups to construct a shared identity through the technologies of the self-help group horizontally between and among groups at a physical distance. Embodying particular externally imposed lacks and political and economic values and attitudes acquired through participating in WEP together, members' interests may have been formed in interactions as represented through the discourses and practices they engage. These interests formed in relationships may have further created appropriately and communally delimited solidarity with other group members who are contextually constituted through the recoding of relatively similar discourses and practices. Through these processes members may have learned, embodied and reproduced those values, interests and attitudes, thus, they may have come to imagine a possible future collectively. These women subjects of self-help groups can be seen as intersubjectivating themselves in multi-dimensional ways: between other subjects (subjects intersubjectivating with other subjects) within the development apparatus (in so doing creating a constituency) as well as between the development apparatus and material practices (subjects intersubjectivating with the apparatus). In so doing, the particular set of

---

community. Thus, consistent with what constitutes women's empowerment on USAID's terms, it was intended to enable women to exercise power upon themselves to make *right* choices "to improve their well-being and that of their families and communities" (USAID/Nepal, n.d.a). Two short stories are offered to give learners ways in which they can organize the family gathering. The RR&A primer further prescribes what women should address at these family and men's meetings (The Asian Foundation, 1999, May, p. 110).

imperatives (e.g., efficiency) as articulated through shifting local/global social relations are normalized and reproduced by complex processes within and outside of this gendered liberal instrumental constituency of becoming.

Having discussed some examples of types of individual management practices deployed within the WEP that enabled its participants to discipline themselves I now turn to delineate one contour of this new developmentality within which WEP seems to have been constituted.

New Developmentality

Building on Foucault's notion of governmentality, I understand *developmentality as* an order of development practice and discourse, thus a modality by which power is exercised within the development apparatus. This developmentality is not static but rather is constantly being produced as an effect of ongoing relations between the evolution of the development institutions' centralizing powers and the creation of technologies oriented towards subjects of development, be they academics, practitioners or recipients, and intended to govern them in a sustainable way (cf. Brown, 2001). Developmentality has a transnational character because it not only works within but also cuts across nation-state boundaries through transnational power relations on multiple levels and scales (J. Ferguson & Gupta, 2002).[46] The developmentality of WEP appears to be different in that it transforms the previous mainstream developmentality, the institutionally exercised and visible coercive powers of development institutions such as the World Bank or USAID or states, into an invisible mode of self/group-governance

[46] Ferguson and Gupta (2002) identified a transnational character of governmentality by arguing that the mode of government has been set up not only among the WTO and the IMF but also transnational grassroots organizations.

(Rankin, 2001).[47] While I acknowledge that this developmentality is articulated differently from context to context and agree with Rankin that the domain of rural finance is contested by competing rationalities of governance, WEP seems to be constituted by yet not limited to three operational imperatives: neoliberalism, social relations of gender, caste and class, and humanism.

First, this developmentality appears to be consistent with neoliberalism. On one hand, it attempts to rationalize the parallel between the minimization of states' role in markets[48] and development institutions' role in development activities as efficient.[49] On the other hand, it seeks to democratize or decentralize a political system where democratization or decentralization is understood as reducing centralized authority in favor of self/group-regulating political and economic citizens.[50] The drive of efficiency within this imperative seems to constitute subjects, be they experts, practitioners or recipients, to desire to minimize donor inputs and maximize recipient inputs while the drive for democracy appear to underwrite the creation of technologies by which women subjects discipline themselves in relation to "modernized" ideals that are partly specified by this developmentality. For the experts and practitioners, the motivation and capacity of the Third World poor to act in their own interests, as made visible and legitimated within this developmentality, come to be the objects of intensive study, intervention and

---

[47] Rankin (2001) has articulated a shift in developmentality from "a view that the state (specifically the commercial banks it owns and regulates) has an obligation to make finance capital accessible to the disadvantaged rural poor, to one that devolves responsibility for securing economic opportunity to individuals acting as responsible agents of their own well-being" (p. 20).

[48] See Rankin (2001) and Ruccio (1991) for example.

[49] Odell's claims regarding WEP (1998, December) are clearly consistent with this rationality.

[50] Again Odell's claims regarding WEP (1998, December) embody this rationality.

governmentalization (cf. Cruikshank, 1999). In effect, and moving now to my second point, existing social relations, such as gender, caste and/or class relations, now seem to be actively and partially recognized and appropriated into the developmentality. The imaginary of the ideal female within this developmentality can be traced to the classical masculine model of a rational economic subject (cf. Hewitson, 1999): these women are understood to be rational insofar as they will act in their own interests; they are understood to be reasonable insofar as they will fulfill their contracted obligations (as secured by their embedding in relations of feudal-patriarchal solidarity); and they are understood to be bread-winners (thought not necessarily heads) of households insofar as they will distribute their income to the benefit of their family and continue to perform their household chores. Thus, the successful subjectivation of Third World women through this particular gendered socialization process seems to rely upon a supplement: feminine notions of mutual obligation to the family and self-help group. This is different from the individualist model of citizenship that tends to construct individuals as "free" rational political and economic citizens insofar as they are responsible for their property, family etc. within the limits given by the God or the Lord in a feudal society (or class structure) or the state in a modern society. In processes of subjectivation, they can be seen as embodying new gendered identities, such as rational masculinity, while their successful subjectivation as rational economic subjects requires that they retain, unrecognized, their feminine sense of mutual obligation only to specific groups of people. Third, the initially coercive exercise of power by which they are forced into this subjectivity is legitimate insofar as this developmentality constructs women as self/group-selecting, rational and autonomous, thus, humanist subjects who exist within the historically and contextually

developed social relations that are only visible and valued on terms specified by surrounding discourses.

Together these weave a constantly changing neoliberal, gendered/casted/classed and humanist background to what I call an *imperialist mode of developmentality* (another word for Development) which shares some rationalities with what Ruccio (2003) has called a disciplinary "imperialist machine" that "has no goal or telos" and "can never be 'satisfied'" yet "enact[s] designs" and "civilize[s] those who attempt to resist its apparent lessons," "make[s] them succumb to the naturalized logic" (p. 90). It creates the conditions of existence for imperialism by "defining private property rights and opening up markets" (D. F. Ruccio, 2003, p. 88). Yet, the latter is done at a different scale in the case of WEP or other microfinance institutions: not between countries but within a country by educating individuals to be self- or group-seeking in a commodity based (not necessarily capitalist) economic system (Sanyal, 1993). Formed within this imperialist mode of developmentality, WEP women subjects appear to produce themselves through the ever more efficient technologies and identifications that enable and delimit the exercise of their power over others and themselves. With this move, the old sovereign governing development institutions appear to retreat in the name of participation and/or empowerment to govern their projects at a distance, or more accurately, to let their subjects step forward to discipline themselves on terms articulated by the shifting imperialist mode of developmentality. In this process, this developmentality shifts responsibility from donors to "clients" (Rankin, 2001) and now "citizens." By making its clients and citizens employ a set of technologies to govern themselves, the donors escape responsibility for the "failures" of development. WEP was a time-limited program based on the assumption that once women clients and citizens learned the skills required to

govern themselves, they would be capable of keeping it up by themselves. Now, these gendered liberal instrumental constituencies of becoming, formed partly through the developmentality, are solely responsible for actions which were, in the first instance, valued by the imperialist mode of developmentality and partly supported by context specific though unrecognized hierarchies such as those of gender and caste. In so doing, this imperialist mode of developmentality secures conditions of existence of globalized neoliberalism, local gender, caste and class relations as well as a humanist notion of "self/group-selecting" individuals by extending its constituency through deploying the technologies of developmentality, some of which I discussed above. Indeed, the imperialist mode of developmentality is discursively formed by and forms development practices in a manner that secures conditions for the universalization of capital by appropriating its outside, precapital (Sanyal, 1993). This program, if successful, saddles participants with responsibility for failure while ensuring that their success involves internalization of the terms of the imperialist mode of developmentality and their future subjection within a global imperialist order that is not of their design. In addition to creating and delimiting fields of possible actions for its subjects, the operation of this developmentality simultaneously renders invisible and thereby hazards perpetuating inequitable social relations, such as those of gender, class, and caste, that development paradoxically both says that it is trying to eliminate and refuses to recognize. In this way it limits space both for engagement with development and for alternatives to development to emerge. With the gradual shift from its coercive imposition to subjects' later voluntary subjectivation this imperialist mode of developmentality constructs women subjects as citizens of a dead-end world.

Opening Up Possibilities Via Anti-Essentialist Marxian Theory of Class

While the official discourse of WEP well represents poor Third World women as empowering political and economic actors, it becomes problematic, as is exemplified in the field of development, when the terms of a developmentality are blind to its limits. In addition, if subjects' agency is critically recognized without falling into the old notion of "false consciousness," we reach what Spivak (1998) calls a "difficult truth", that "internalized gendering by women, perceived as ethical choice, accepts exploitation as it accepts sexism in the name of a willing conviction that this is how one is good as a woman, even ethical as a woman" (p. 342). In the context of WEP, I understand that the WEP subjects appeared to gain economic and political agency by subjecting themselves to and thereby subjectivating themselves through obeying the bourgeois law and the rules of surrounding discourses and that they derive pleasure individually and collectively by deploying technologies of the self/group under seemingly exploitative contexts that can be seen as "ethical" or moral in their embedded social relations. This makes it difficult to transform the conditions that sustain the imperialist mode of developmentality.[51] By drawing on anti-essentialist Marxian analyses of class via performance, appropriation and distribution of surplus[52] and citizenship, I will discuss two possibilities (among many) to approach this "difficult truth": first, the anti-essentialist analyses of class and citizenship allows us to see a mode of developmentality other than the imperialist that may create a

[51] Cornwall (2003) identified the issue as "a familiar, but, unresolved debate in feminist circles over 'objective' and 'subjective' interests" (p. 1331). See Jónasdóttir (1988) and Molyneux (1985) for further discussions on this topic.

[52] See Gibson-Graham, Resnick and Wolff (2000, 2001) for excellent collections of essays drawing on anti-essentialist Marxian analysis of class.

space for us to theorize alternative strategies to transform any Development; and second, these analyses can also be used as tools to examine the effects of development activities.

One newspaper article notes that the income some WEP women made through participating in entrepreneurial activities was sometimes appropriated by their male family members (Silwal, 2002).[53] In Marxian class terms, these women could be recognized as exploited within a *feudal* class structure whose conditions of existence are partly secured by gender and caste/religious relations that are excluded from consideration within the mainstream development discourses. The direction of local male NGO officers of higher caste and authority may compel male heads of household to support their female family members' participation in such programs but leaves unquestioned caste and gender relations and access to cash that first made the women's participation possible and then ensured that the surplus produced would be appropriated by their husbands.[54] In another case, some women apparently enacted the ideal female economic subjectivity by appropriating surplus they produced on their own, thus, in class terms, engaging in an *independent* class process. Some may argue that this class process is not exploitative because the women were appropriating and then distributing their own surplus. However, this analysis does not ask after the conditions that have led these women to desire to distribute their surplus in a particular manner. For example, if these women distributed their surplus to their families, these women may have been enacting subjectivities as good mothers, wives, dutiful daughters-in-law and appropriate political and economic citizens, all of which may have been idealized within the intersection of neoliberalism and other embedded discourses. By way of another example, as described

[53] Goetz and Gupta (1996) and Rankin (2002) also pointed out this exploitative aspect.
[54] Defined as labor value produced beyond that necessary to reproduce the labor power.

in the same newspaper article I referred to above (Silwal, 2002), some WEP women who were unable to meet the payment schedules secured by relations of mutual obligation sometimes borrow from family members, relatives or other non/governmental microcredit institutions. As Charusheela (1997) indicates, some might have borrowed from local moneylenders and these moneylenders might have demanded their sexual or domestic services as part of payment. This relationship would be based on debt obligation, similar to feudal serfs taking loans in cash or seed stock from their lords, for whom they need to work in order to pay off the loan and its class process would be feudal. Thus, the discourse of empowerment can produce a variety of exploitative as well as non-exploitative class processes that are produced and stabilized within discourses that it, in turn, is unable and/or not inclined to recognize.

As with any alternative view, this anti-essentialist Marxian class analysis, however, also enables us to open a field of new possibilities. Once again, these WEP women are subjected by and subjectivated through multiple discourses. Those that intersect with this developmentality are only a few of the many through which they are constituted, and these women always necessarily misrecognize messages the agents of domination want to deliver (Althusser, 2001 [1971]). Even within the WEP's well-structured pedagogical space, some women self-help members can be seen to have collectively produced and appropriated their surplus forming a *communal* class process. For example, in one case, a WEP member started a bakery in cooperation with her husband who was a subject excluded from this development ("In nepal, a novel project mixes literacy and microfinance to reach thousands", 2001). While the article does not specify whether the surplus value they collectively produced was appropriated by the couple collectively, if it was, they established a communal class process. In addition to participation in such

communal processes, a lens provided by anti-essentialist Marxian class analysis acknowledges that one can concurrently occupy multiple class positions (Resnick & Wolff, 1987). For example, the same woman whose surplus was produced as an independent commodity producer and appropriated by her husband could be taking part in collective activities with members of the self-help group which, collectively, decides to appropriate the surplus that they together produce. By way of another example, one of the success stories reveals that women of one WEP village bank have initiated various social campaigns that are not traditionally understood as productive (Pact, 2002b). Those campaigns range from donation of money to the Community Based Organization (CBO) that provide medical services and to an NGO that serves blind people, to organization of a rally in collaboration with other organizations that work against girls' trafficking, and a community cleaning campaign, to organization of a community event to honor senior citizens of the community. While overt celebration of these unproductive, non-class activities seems logical within the neoliberal inflected developmentality insofar as some of these activities fill in the gaps created by a lack of infrastructural support from the state, an anti-essentialist Marxian class perspective offers a different way of examining the same stories. The women actively distributed a portion of their surplus they collectively produced by organizing a big raffle and *bhailo* (religious fund-raising activity) not only to its members but also to non-members in their community for non-class purposes.[55] In other words, they not only formed *communal* class processes but also engaged in *collective gift*

[55] Sato, Jimba and Murakami (2000) also told a similar story in which a non-WEP Nepali self-help group collectively produced surplus by showing their dancing during festivals and working together on a UNDP project in their community and put an agreed portion of the payment they produced into a communal fund. These women distributed a portion of their surplus to a non-member mother in their community for her to take her sick child to see a doctor, thus, for a non-class purpose.

economies in which the surplus collectively produced was appropriated and distributed by the women surplus producers for extending their communal class relations beyond productive class process to create and sustain (conditions of existence of) a larger community (Community Economies Collective, 2001).

The stories above reveal that collective appropriation and distribution of surplus can be seen as fostering a condition of existence of a communal subject (Community Economies Collective, 2001; Gibson-Graham, 2003a, 2006) as well as what I call a *communal constituency of becoming*. This communal constituency of becoming is similar to a gendered liberal constituency of becoming in that citizens are constantly in the ethical practice of constructing new identities in response to culturally induced suffering. However, it differs from this representation insofar as this communal constituency of becoming consists in the collective of active participants of a political community who exercise their "social powers" for the common good that creates a larger community instead of exercising their political powers for individual or group based interests. Moreover, the ethical response of this constituency to suffering cultivates generosity to those who are outside of their constituency in part by acknowledging that they provide conditions of existence of their constituency and in part by appreciating new unexpected possibilities of connecting with others and expanding their capacities through those possibilities (Connolly, 1999). Distinct from a gendered liberal instrumental constituency of becoming whose effects are often to sustain and transform Development, this communal constituency of becoming contains possibilities for destabilizing the very conditions that sustain the gendered liberal instrumental constituency of becoming by constructing a different notion of citizenship, namely radical democratic notion of citizenship, from within the heart of Development.

One way to understand the citizenship constructed within this communal constituency of becoming is through the lens of an anti-essentialist analysis. By recognizing historically constructed difference, contingency and paradox of becoming, this communal constituency of becoming goes beyond a gendered family and/or self-help group based notion of citizenship that constructs citizens, who are bounded by familial obligations as mothers and wives and self-group obligations as members, and fails to produce "a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization" (Marx as cited in Spivak, 1999, p. 260) larger than their family and/or self-group membership within the new developmentality. This alternative notion of citizenship, one that is not based on the familial or self-help group model, understands women not homogeneously as mothers, wives or self-group members whose activities are specific and not generalizable (Mouffe, 1992). Instead, it aims to construct a common political identity that would create possibilities for women and men to identify themselves as members of a larger community, social beings, without being restricted by any pre-given, fixed identities. Integrating an anti-essentialist Marxian citizenship analysis as theorized by Mouffe (1992) into that of class analysis, I argue that its citizens could be connected through partial and radically contingent fixations of multiple identities partly through articulation of social links between those who produce surplus and those who create and sustain conditions of existence of production, appropriation and distribution of the surplus (class process). In so doing, they may form a communal constituency of becoming. Such a communal constituency of becoming can be thought of as a nodal point, "partial fixation [of multiple identities] which limit the flux of the signified under the signifier" (Mouffe, 1992, p. 371). By this, I understand that within a nodal point, what counts as, for example, the terms citizenship and empowerment (the signifiers), are understood by

multiple subjects through their own respective discourses in a more or less similar manner. It fosters communal subjectivities, one of which is an abstract citizen who exercises "social powers," as opposed to self and/or group-differentiated powers, upon herself with others who share a shifting common struggle (Marx, 1978). Institution of these nodal points would destabilize conditions of existence of any imperialist mode of developmentality from within. In contrast to the individual and group based citizenship in which citizens gain political agency by limiting their possibilities within those secured by the gendered bourgeois law, this abstract citizen of a communal constituency of becoming gains social agency by opening up possibilities for realization of her liberty as a communal being beyond the limits of the law.[56]

Establishing of social links between surplus producers and those who provide conditions of existence for class processes through the distribution of surplus is not a new idea. In fact, Marx pointed out that "the proletarian dictatorship begins economical transition 'with a change of distribution'" (as cited in Tabak, 2003, p. 530).[57] It is supported by already existing practices, for example, of Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), an Australian industrial corporation (Gibson-Graham & O'Neill, 2001) and Mondragon, a Spanish industrial co-op (Gibson-Graham, 2003b). In the case of BHP, the struggle over the environment and future livelihood of the inhabitants of the region where BHP operated mining activities between the inhabitants (a communal constituency) and BHP (a non-communal constituency) made it possible for the inhabitants who were thought of as outside of class processes of BHP to establish a new class position in the distributive

---

[56] Marx (1978) argued that the bourgeois law to be that which secures the right of property, which is as same as the right of self-interest.

[57] See also DeMartino (2003) and Resnick & Wolff (1987) for further discussions on this idea.

class processes of BHP. The initiating of communal constituency (the inhabitants) and the responding constituency (BHP) articulated a social link through a distribution of surplus from BHP through a political movement. This articulation can be called "ethical singularity," that is "a mind-changing one-on-one responsible contact" for the collective efforts (Spivak, 1998, p. 340) (to be sure, these efforts are made, not pre-given), in this case changing the flow of distribution of surplus for the common good. It has a characteristic of ethical singularity that is a slow and attentive effort from both sides. While I agree with Gibson-Graham and O'Neill that the initiating constituency might become a new condition for the exploitative class processes of BHP, I believe that a continuous formulation of a communal constituency of becoming is possible through critical and continuous practices of articulation or ethical singularity between one communal constituency and its responding constituencies.

Pleasure or happiness that arises in this process of becoming a part of a communal constituency through technologies of the self/group has not only political but also social dimensions. It can be distinguished from the pleasure felt by those independent commodity producers while acting on the ideal constructed within the imperialist mode of developmentality through appropriating and distributing their surplus to their own families based on their and their family's interests. In the same manner, I would argue that we can distinguish *radical democratic empowerment* from WEP's neoliberal/imperialist empowerment that constructs subjects as self/group-seeking individuals in a commodity exchange based and bourgeois law governed political and economic system where they may be (unconsciously) alienated and exploited. Based on the discussion above, radical democratic empowerment can be understood as subjects exercising social power as active participants in collective endeavors for the common good, possibly without being

alienated and exploited by others and themselves. In this way, the anti-essentialist Marxian class analyses of class and citizenship can be used as tools to examine the effects of development activities.

Moreover, these Marxian analyses of class and citizenship illuminate ways to be a good woman other than the ideal self/group member and citizen who maximizes her capacity to serve her familial and/or self-group interests yet is bound by the bourgeois law articulated by the imperialist mode of developmentality. A good woman within a communal constituency of becoming should be a good participant of a political community, a radical democratic citizen who exercise social powers for the common good. Thus, she may or may not have a distinctive gender identity. As stated earlier in this chapter, this radical democratic notion of citizenship acknowledges the impossibility of fully representing citizens and recognizes this as one of the conditions of possibility of any representation within the space that it delimits. By combining this with anti-essentialist Marxian class analysis, one that understands that one can concurrently engage in multiple class processes, she may be possibly embedded within both other exploitative class processes and inequitable social relations. Thus, in agreement with Mouffe(1992) who has argued that issues can be solved only by continuously reformulating them in a more adequate manner, I again suggest practices of ethical singularity which involve critical one-on-one responses from both sides for a mutually negotiated common good whose enactment will erode any imperialist mode of developmentality or Development and foster a more communal mode of developmentality on a local and a wider even global scale.

In this section, I attempted to show that anti-essentialist Marxian analyses of class and citizenship reveal that the technologies that were formed through the imperialist

mode of developmentality can and do produce not only exploitative social relations but also communal, non-exploitative social relations that, though they may not be recognized, may contain possibilities to subvert conditions of existence of the imperialist mode of developmentality. All the technologies I discussed above, then, cannot be understood as good or bad in themselves. They may paradoxically and contingently support conditions of existence of communal and liberal instrumental constituencies of becoming. What is at issue here is the choice to expand our engagement such that it recognizes the possibility of and engages on terms beyond those specified by the currently mainstream imperialist mode of developmentality.

Conclusion

I have explored an intersection of the discourses of women and development, of adult literacy, of microfinance and of human rights and their effects on the stories of possibilities available to those subjects formed therein. By drawing on Foucault's notion of subjects and governmentality and Connolly's idea of becoming, I looked at a particular case that exemplified the shift in representation and examined a variety of technologies produced in the case that appeared to enable its women subjects to engage certain practices in paradoxical ways. Further, this approach enabled me to identify one contour of today's imperialist mode of developmentality: neoliberalism, gender, caste and class domination and humanism that represented its subjects as gendered economic and political actors and was normalized to what the context specific agents of domination considered "efficient" and "effective" on their terms through the languages and the bodies of its subjects as individuals and groups at a distance. I argued that its subjects were made to enter "a dead-end world" by coercively and voluntarily being required to take heavy responsibilities without an appropriate infrastructural support.

What makes this imperialist mode of developmentality difficult to break through is that the effects produced by interventions such as WEP are sustained not only by the technologies of domination but also by those of the self and the self-help group. By this, the developmentality sustained by relationships among particular technologies, be they those of domination, the self or the self-help group, enabled certain women subjects to do certain things that can be understood as pleasurable as well as ethical on the subjects' terms within their embedded social relations. In addition, by instituting the family and/or the self-help group as the structural model for its notion of citizenship those technologies seemed instrumental in encouraging a bourgeois law that would limit possibilities for creating a larger political community. In effect, and as stated above, the manufactured coincidence of expectations of the centralizing development institution and aspirations of its recipients for change restricts the field of the possible while rendering that restriction invisible. With this the context specific agents of domination escape responsibility for the paths taken while the futures available are limited to those visible from that terrain. This seems to have created conditions in which larger inequitable social relations, such as those of gender, class, caste and imperialism, may both sustain the apparent success of interventions such as WEP while they remain invisible. Therefore, I argued that the discourses formed subsequent to a context specific developmentality shape the actions possible by those we seek to serve (and by ourselves). As such, it is not enough for us to look for improvements within the terms of the mainstream developmentality.

In order to open up possibilities for destabilizing this imperialist mode of developmentality, I deployed the example of two alternative discourses, anti-essentialist Marxian analyses of class and citizenship. On one hand, they enabled us to see WEP, understood as one of today's best practices, as producing multiple class processes of which

some, if not the majority, could be exploitative. On the other hand, they enabled us to see possibilities for identifying and creating non-exploitative class processes within the same social relations. In integrating an anti-essentialist Marxian citizenship analysis into that of class, I argued that the creation of communal constituencies of becoming as nodal points can be disruptive to the continuously shifting imperialist mode of developmentality.

Active ignorance of the paradoxical and contradictory effects of any development activity reduces possibilities for continuous transformation for which I have argued in this chapter. Deploying these alternative analytical tools offers alternative formsthrough which we may work with our objects/subjects and ourselves. In this chapter, I find a combination of Foucault's notion of subjects and governmentality, Connolly's idea of becoming and anti-essentialist Marxian analyses on class and citizenship useful to identify and expose silenced issues that perpetuate inequities within the official development discourse. Yet, I critically acknowledge that these analytical tools are only a few of the many available today, that the discourses in which these analytical tools are theorized are internally diverse and often conflictual, and that the contents of silenced issues, paralleling the change in developmentality, are always shifting. Therefore, it is crucial for us to repeatedly work through the possibilities afforded by alternative discourses and, thereby, continuously attempt to expose silences created through the application of any imperialist mode of developmentality and through that practice keep opening up and expanding the field of the possible.

CHAPTER IV

READING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT VIA MICROFINANCE THROUGH LACAN'S FOUR DISCOURSES

Introduction

This chapter is a transnational feminist attempt to open up a new space for rethinking women's empowerment via microfinance[1] and development by drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, specifically Lacan's four discourses, and anti-essentialist Marxist theory. These frameworks are deployed in the hopes of expanding theoretical conversations within development discourses, particularly the post-development discourse. It seeks to transform what Spivak (1998, p. 164) has called Development (with capital D) where that is understood as "the civilizing mission *(la mission civilisatrice)* of the new imperialism" (p. 331). In recent years post-development critics have examined mechanisms of women's empowerment via microfinance. Representations within the development discourses of these women have shifted from disempowered, illiterate, ignorant, and, backwards to empowered, rational, economic clients. In some cases, these post-development analyses, overdetermined by Escobar's introduction of Foucault into development discourses (1984-85), have deployed Foucauldian insights, such as governmentality (Brigg, 2001a; Elyachar, 2002; Lairap-Fonderson, 2002; Rankin, 2001)[2]

---

[1] Some make a clear distinction between microcredit and microfinance (Qudrat-I Elahi, 2003). In this paper I use the term microfinance, credit and saving, to signify both.

[2] Foucault's governmentality is used not only within the discourse of women's empowerment via microfinance but also to examine other aspects of the discourse of development. See Appadurai (2002), Bryant (2002), Ferguson and Gupta (2002) and Watts (2003).

and technologies of the self (Triantafillou & Nielsen, 2001).[3] While these Foucauldian post-development analyses have opened up a certain field of the possible by making visible mechanisms by which individuals come to govern themselves within power/knowledge relations they necessarily have foreclosed others.

Two possibilities foreclosed by Foucauldian post-development analyses can be understood as partly stemming the Foucauldian notion of power that has no outside. First, Joan Copjec (1994), a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist, in her critique of Foucauldian power analytics' influence on psychoanalysis in feminist film studies defines this understanding of power as historicism: "the reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations of power and knowledge" (p. 6).[4] Through a lens provided by Lacanian psychoanalysis,[5] this historicism forces Foucauldian post-development critics to tacitly accept a subject who remains "undivided" (Spivak, 1988b, p. 274), articulable in, or in a more deterministic moment, articulated by, discourse. This makes it possible for Foucauldian post-development critics to conceive of dynamic subjectivities—for example, of Third World women—in terms of the deterministic ways in which they are trapped within the symbolic order. By way of example, Rankin (2001), who drew on Foucault's notion of governmentality, claimed that her analysis, which examines the

---

[3] Chapter 3 is an intervention to expand post-development critiques of microfinance or women's empowerment via microfinance that often draw on Foucault's notions of governmentality and technologies of the self. It brings in insights provided by Connolly's politics of becoming, anti-essentialist Marxian class and citizenship analyses in manners that make differences through making class visible and highlights Third World women's capacity to know and act (in other words, power/knowledge).

[4] Copjec (1994) limited her critique to Foucault's "*Discipline and Punish*, *The History of Sexuality*, and essays and interviews of the mid to late 1970s, when Foucault reversed his position with respect to linguistic and psychoanalytic theory" (p. 4).

[5] For example, see Adams and Cowie (1990), Brennan (1989), Copjec (1989, 1990, 1994, 2002), Saleci (1998), Spivak (1988b).

connections between political rationality within a particular development apparatus and microcredit as a governmental strategy, reveals "markets themselves as a mechanism of governance that carefully regulates individual behavior" (p. 33). While critically acknowledging that her and other Foucauldian post-development authors' works are potent political interventions, which I do not intend to minimize, what concerns me is that a subject is conceived of in their work as fully articulable. A Lacanian psychoanalytic approach would not disagree with this claim, but it would argue that what is examined is limited to that which appears in the symbolic order of development.

In order to highlight possibilities that are not as visible within Foucauldian post-development analyses, I have chosen to work with Lacanian psychoanalysis and, in particular, Lacan's four discourses.[6] Lacan's four discourses: those of the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst offer a means to articulate four key social phenomena, respectively governing, educating, protesting and revolutionizing(Bracher, 1994).[7] The analysis that follows will show that Foucauldian post-development analyses, in which the regime of power is represented as having no outside, only illuminate the visible portions of Lacan's discourses of the Master and the University. That is,the Foucauldian subject is theorized as independent of what Lacan (1981) called *the real*,

---

[6] The concept of four discourses is first introduced by Lacan in the Seminar XVII (1969-70) that was published in French in 1991. Russell Grigg has translated the Seminar into English (2007). I draw here on Lacan's discussions on the discourses of the Master, University, Hysteric and Analyst scattered in his writings that are translated in English after 1970, mainly (but not limited to) Seminar XX (1998) and Television (1990) as well as those scholars who drew on his four discourses: mainly, Adams (1996); Bracher (1994); Fink (1995, 1999); Grigg (1993); Wajcman (2003); and Žižek (1998).

[7] According to Fink (1995), the discourses of the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst are not the only discourses that could be imagined. However, he argued that these four discourses "cover a great deal of ground and are extremely useful in examining the main-springs and aims of various discourses" (p. 145).

which is "the impossible" (p. 167) within the realm of the symbolic, which may be approached but "always comes back to the same place" (p. 49).[8] This Lacanian notion of the real is appropriated by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) and integrated into socio-ideological analysis as *antagonism* (Žižek, 1989, 1990). This chapter is an attempt to examine how invisible intersubjective dialectical relationships of desire that subjects of development come to develop with Development are produced and maintained transnationally by shedding light on the real/antagonism, a space that has been severely undertheorized in the discussions of the subjectivities of women in development discourses.[9]

Second, not only mainstream development but also its critical counterpart post-development analyses are largely *capitalocentic* (Gibson-Graham, 1996; Gibson-Graham & Ruccio, 2001).[10] Capitalocentrism is an essentialist tendency, when examining the economy, to assume it to be capitalist and, when class is recognized, the analysis of class is conducted within or in relation to capitalism. That is, while post-development critics are critical about developmentalism within mainstream discourses, the economy is taken for

---

[8] Copjec (1994), a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist, also has made this point in her critique of Foucauldian power analytics' influence on psychoanalysis in feminist film studies.

[9] My essay entitled "Subjectivity, Enjoyment, and Development: Preliminary Thoughts on a New Approach to Postdevelopment" (2006) is derived from my second comprehensive exam, which can be understood as my initial attempt to shed light on the Lacanian notion of the real in development discourses. This chapter is an expanded version based on both.

[10] Gibson-Graham (1996) defines capitalocentrism as follows:

> other forms of economy (not to mention noneconomic aspects of social life) are often understood primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally the same as (or modeled upon) capitalism: as being deficient or substandard imitations; as being opposite to capitalism; as being the complement of capitalism; as existing in capitalism's space or orbit. (p. 6)

granted as pervasively capitalist and remains non-deconstructed.[11] This capitalocentrism makes it difficult to recognize economic differences let alone foster economic alternatives to capitalism. Further, the focus on power in these analytics often enables their authors to construct class as power. This understanding of class as power collapses economic process of class and political process of power (admittedly it is often difficult to differentiate the two) and, in so doing, make it impossible to see distinctive features of each process particularly when the two do not coincide. In order to shed light on economic differences and the distinctiveness of economic process of class I will draw on anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class where class is understood as process of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus (Resnick & Wolff, 1987).[12]

My main political goal here is, if I understand Foucauldian post-development critics correctly, similar to theirs: to challenge any form of developmentalism thus Development. My intention is not to bluntly criticize their analyses but to illuminate possibilities that are not conceivable within their analytic by offering a different approach to examine the same phenomena and, in so doing, to continuously wither away "scattered hegemonies" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b) that provide conditions of existence for Development.[13] I am aware that invoking Lacanian and anti-essentialist Marxist perspectives will obscure perspectives and political possibilities available through Foucauldian and other theoretical frameworks. Neither Lacanian psychoanalysis nor anti-

---

[11] Developmentalism is an approach to development that is characterized by "economism, linearity and scientism" led by the North (Michael Watts, 1995, p. 47).

[12] See Gibson-Graham, Resnick and Wolff (2000, 2001) as excellent collections of essays which draw on anti-essentialist Marxist theory of class.

[13] Briefly, these hegemonies are those of the interconnected yet scattered economic, political, cultural, and/or legal structures on multiple levels and in multiple locations which collectively delimit the field of legitimate expression for women's capacities while rendering these limits invisible.

essentialist Marxist theory is used here as a metalanguage or metadiscourse whose invocation subsumes its alternatives. With this critical acknowledgement, I wish to introduce the Lacanian analytical tool of the four discourses along with anti-essentialist Marxist theory which may help us to examine development discourses from theoretical perspectives and with political productivities other than those informed by Foucauldian post-development analyses.

In this chapter I will first outline Lacan's basic scheme of discourse and define the Lacanian terms used in order to provide the common vocabulary required for mutual understanding. I will then examine different subject formations in the development discourse with a special reference to women's empowerment via microfinance through the lens provided by Lacan's four discourses and anti-essentialist Marxian theory.

Lacan's Four Discourses and Basic Concepts

The Basic Formula of Discourse

Lacan (1998) understood *discourse* as that which determines a form of social link (*lien social*) that is founded on language and aims at meaning. For Lacan, discourse was "'a necessary structure' that 'subsists in certain fundamental relations' (11) and thus conditions every speech act (216) and the rest of our behavior and actions as well (11)" (Lacan as cited and summarized by Bracher, 1994, p. 107). He articulated four discourses based on psychoanalytic discourse by using four fundamental psychological factors: "knowledge/belief, values/ideals, self-division/alienation, and *jouissance*/enjoyment" (Bracher, 1994, p. 109), that occupy four positions: those of the agent, other, production and truth. Let's closely look at how Lacan symbolizes discourse. Before proceeding, and in particular for feminist readers, it is crucial to keep in mind that the positions which are

determined by the discourse I will describe below are prior to commonly understood notions of biological sex and social construction of gender.

$$\text{Formula} \quad \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \quad \frac{\text{other}}{\text{production}} \qquad \text{(Jacques Lacan, 1998 , p. 17)}$$

The terms, agent, other, production and truth occupy four positions. First the top half of the formula:

agent →other

The top left is the position of the enunciating *agent* of the discourse. The one who occupies the position of the agent determines the social effect of discourse. Second, the top right is the position of the other in relation to the agent, thus, the enunciated. The other is acted upon by the agent through a speech act. Next, the bottom right is the position of the *production*:

agent → other → production

Production refers both to the process and to the something produced by the signification process from the enunciating agent to the enunciated. This position is where Lacan located *enjoyment*, the enjoyment produced by the signification process. Finally the bottom left is the position of the *truth*:

truth → agent → other → production //

The truth is represented by the enunciating agent for another signifier (the other). Yet, the enunciating agent is separated from accessing the truth directly. S/he does and cannot know that what s/he says, what s/he intends to say is not the truth of what s/he says, her/his speech always conveys something extra, unknown to her/him. While the enunciating agent appears to be the master of meaning, something always escapes symbolization. This surplus, from which the enunciating agent is unrecoverably alienated,

emerges as the *symptom* within the signification process and is found in the position of production. There is a disjunction between this production and the truth (//) because the signification process cannot bear the truth that it signifies, nor can the effect of the speech (what is produced) be replaced by the cause of speech (the truth).

Formula	(the positivity)	agent → other
		↑ —— —— ↓
	(the negativity)	truth // production

The top part of the formula appears in the symbolic order (the positivity) while the bottom part does not (the negativity). This bottom half is obscured, repressed, made latent within the symbolic structure. What I find unique about Lacanian psychoanalysis, and what I consider a major contribution to the current development discourse, is its capacity to consider the bottom half that illuminates the regime of power as having outside, which is impossible within historicist post-development analyses: the position of the "truth" as hidden yet supporting the enunciating agent and as represented by the enunciating agent for another signifier "other"; the other is expected to receive the agent's enunciation and gives a meaning to the enunciation retroactively, but some surplus is always produced, a surplus that escapes symbolization within the speech process between the agent and the other.

The Master's Discourse

Now for the next step. Four psychological factors, the master-signifier (S_1), knowledge (S_2), the subject (S) and the surplus enjoyment (a), occupy the four positions that I have just introduced: agent, other, production and truth. These four factors are

logically rotated[14] through these positions in order to produce the discourses of the Master, University, Hysteric and Analyst. The location of the terms *master-signifier*, *subject*, *knowledge* and *surplus enjoyment* and how they function in relation to one another are crucial to understanding the different subject formations within the four discourses.

Let us start with what Lacan identified as the basic discourse, that of the Master. In the Master's discourse the *master signifier* (S_1) occupies the position of the agent, stands in alone for the lack in the middle of *the Other* around which all other ordinary signifiers revolve (S_2). S_2 represents *the Other*, the chain of ordinary signifiers that is called into action by S_1. It refers to *knowledge* because it functions as a battery of knowledge. Notice that it is not the agent but the Other (S_2) who produces knowledge about the master-signifier, the key element in the agent's enunciation (S_1). The agent in the Master's discourse does not speak from a position of knowledge, but he proclaims his demand with authority. It is the task of the Other to give meaning to his demand. Let's apply this signification process to the formula just explained the above. The top part of the formula

$$\text{agent} \rightarrow \text{other}$$

can be replaced by

$$S_1 \rightarrow S_2$$

Neither S_1 nor S_2 is the subject ($\$$). The subject, who occupies the position of truth, is represented by the master signifier (S_1) for another signifier (S_2), and S_2 retroactively gives a meaning to S_1. The reason why the subject is symbolized as barred ($\$$) is that the Lacanian subject is split as a consequence of entering the symbolic realm. This lack has the consequence of denying the possibility of his/her *absolute enjoyment* which is the

[14] According to Fink (1995), Lacan found the order of the four elements important.

enjoyment of the fullness of his/her subjectivity.[15] This act of an individual entering the symbolic order, or of repressing this absolute enjoyment, is called *symbolic castration.* Following this castration, absolute enjoyment is no longer available to the subject. The lack in the subject created by symbolic castration, the inaccessibility of absolute enjoyment, alienates his/her desire and produces a condition wherein his/her subjectivation will always and necessarily fail because there is an inassimilable surplus (the *object a*), which cannot be symbolized. In Lacanian terms, the subject is always already blocked by an object, its own constitutive limit, that may vary in itself and/or from context to context. Thus, the Lacanian subject always encounters the failure of the full subjectivation of itself within the symbolic structure. Yet, the location of the split subject in the position of truth reveals that the agent of the Master's discourse does not know the fact that he is divided. By adding this dimension, the formula can be read as follows:

truth ($\$$) → agent (S_1) → other (S_2)

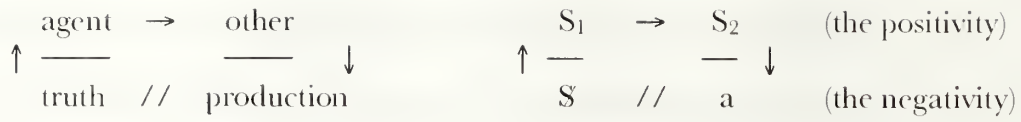
Through this symbolization process an inassimilable excess (a) is produced. This excess is variously known as the surplus enjoyment, the remainder of the real, or the object cause of desire. Notice that enjoyment is produced through the network of knowledge. This implies that the means by which the subject comes to experience enjoyment depends on how s/he has been articulated within the network of knowledge. With it the formula is complete, the gap between S_1 and S_2 is filled.

truth ($\$$) → agent (S1) → other (S2) → production (a) //

Or to put it differently:

---

[15] This absolute enjoyment is non-phallic enjoyment. It indicates that the subject is not castrated by the symbolic and enjoys the fullness of his/her subjectivity.



Here each element (subject, master-signifier, knowledge and surplus enjoyment) and its position (truth, agent, other and production) exactly coincide. According to Lacan, this discourse is the starting point and is called the Master's discourse, named after its agent. It provides the basic matrix of speech. Starting from this base arrangement these four elements, the master-signifier (S_1), knowledge (S_2), *object a* (a), and subject ($), are rotated to form the discourses of the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst.

Before moving to discuss other discourses, a few more concepts need to be introduced. First, a notion unique to Lacanian psychoanalysis: *sexuation.*[16] Sexuation is a process through which sexual difference, an entry point of psychoanalysis, is examined. The subject is sexed by the symbolic castration, the price necessarily paid for entering the symbolic structure (the Other). The lack in the subject that is created by this symbolic castration always renders or *sexuates* the split subject either *masculine* or *feminine.* This sexuation depends on his/her position in relation to the desire she or he inevitably experiences due to the impossibility of full subjectivation. This sexuation is a constant process. By way of example, a woman enunciating subject can be sexuated as masculine or as feminine depending on her location in relation to her desire within any of the four discourses. In this precise sense, sexuation is not a static binary notion. The subjectis always in the processes of sexuation made inevitable by their unavoidable pursuit of the desire produced by the act of symbolic castration necessary for their subjectivation.

---

[16] This logic of sexuation is discussed in the Seminar XX, a section called "A love letter (*une lettre d'amour*)" (1998). See also chapter 8 of Copjec (1994), chapter 8 of Fink (1995), chapter 8 of Salecl (1994) and Salecl (2000).

Next, related to the notion of sexuation, there are the *masculine* and *feminine* structures. The Master's and the University discourses fall into the masculine structure. The dominant position (the agent who occupies the top left) in these discourses necessarily precludes symbolization of the real in the form of either the lack in the subject or *object a*. In these discourses the real remains inaccessible. The Hysteric's and Analyst's discourses, on the other hand, fall into the feminine structure since the dominant position of their discourses (again the top left) includes the real. This location of the real matters in terms of the logic of these two structures. On one hand, the masculine logic is the logic of universality and consistency. By this, the masculine subject, that is the subject of the Master's and University discourses, is wholly subordinated to the symbolic castration and is understood to be determined by the *phallic signifier* which is understood as that which comes to stand in for the lack in the Other. Represented by the phallic signifier, the masculine subject desires an object directly and experiences a *phallic enjoyment* caused by desire of the object that stands in for the lack in the subject. The availability of this phallic enjoyment for the masculine subject is based on at least one constitutive exception that is not subordinated by the phallic signifier. On the other hand, the feminine logic of the Hysteric and Analytic discourses is the logic of "'not whole' *(pas-tout)* with respect to phallic jouissance" (Jacques Lacan, 1998 , p. 7). By this, "not whole" of the feminine subject, the subject of the Hysteric's and Analyst discourses, is subordinated by symbolic castration, thus she is not totally determined by the phallic signifier. The feminine subject does not desire an object directly but desires the Other's desire and has the potential to experience not only phallic enjoyment but also other enjoyment (chapter 7 in Jacques Lacan, 1998 ; Saleel, 1998). By not being wholly determined by the phallic signifier, the feminine logic is the logic of inconsistencies, "not whole" without exception. In this sense,

the feminine subject escapes the firm limit (the limit of the symbolic structure) that comes with the phallic enjoyment of a masculine subject although she is also a product of the symbolic structure. To restate perhaps more clearly, the masculine subject and the feminine subject are differently castrated, divided by the symbolic structure. While each fails to achieve the fullness of his/her subjectivity, their failures are distinct. Masculine subjects are limited to phallic enjoyment while feminine subjects have alternatives that have political ramifications I will address later. Importantly, the two together are not understood to form a whole since each of them is already a failed whole(Salecl, 1994).

Having briefly explained the Lacanian notion of sexuation, let us examine the Master's discourse by way of a famous example, a relationship between the Master and the Slave through the lens afforded by this concept.[17] Again, please keep in mind that the four positions are prior to the commonly understood biological sex or social construction of gender. Thus, the term Master can be replaced with that of Mistress while the Slave can be either male or female. In this scenario, the position from which the Master speaks is already historically power laden and the power shapes both what the Master says and its effects on the Master's Other: the Slave.

The self-identified Master, appearing to be pure drive (wholly conscious) and thus unaware of the limits of symbolization, enunciates excessive demands, such as the demand that the Slave recognizes and attends to him. The reason for this is that the position from which the agent of the Master performs his speech act (the top left) is historically power laden in a manner that predetermines the effect of his speech on the

[17] Hegel is considered as the first one to articulate the Master's discourse. This example is often used to describe the Master's discourse. See Fink(1995) and Žižek (1990) for example. Another famous example is the relationship between Man and Woman.

Other/the Slave. The self-contained Master's speech act appears to him to fully address the content of the Slave. In so doing, the Master experiences *absolute enjoyment* (non-phallic enjoyment), which is derived from rendering the Slave a passive object of his enjoyment. The upper level of formula of the discourse of the Master, the relationship between the agent and the other, is *symmetrical* as seen from the level of the positivity of the speaking agent of the Master's discourse. It is in this sense that Lacan (1998) meant that "There's no such thing as a sexual relationship" (p. 144) because there is no gap between the Master and the Slave, neither is rendered masculine nor feminine, thus, there is no sexual difference between the two.

This symmetrical symbolization process (the upper part of the Master's discourse) is made possible by not only necessarily repressing but also necessarily being supported by the hidden bottom half of the Master's discourse. In the Master's discourse the split subject ($\$$) and the surplus (a) occupy the positions below the bar and form the Lacanian formula of *fantasy* ($\$ \lozenge a$).[18] The truth that is obscured by this discourse is the fact that the subject who occupies the position of truth is marked by a symbolic lack. The split subject attempts to fully articulate the content of the Slave through the enunciation that contains the master-signifier (S_1). There is, however, at least one constitutive exception (the *object a*) that escapes symbolization. The subject becomes neurotic and continuously tries to normalize inconsistencies and instabilities, thus, antagonisms, between the Master (S_1) and the Slave (S_2) within the symbolic structure by constantly creating a new master-signifier as "a nodal point" (*point de capiton*) that "buckles" (Lacan as cited and summarized by Bracher, 1994, p. 119) or "quilts" (Žižek, 1989) other signifiers of discourse into a

[18] This can be read as the barred subject ($\$$) correlative to an object cause of desire (object a).

unified field in order to stabilize his domination.[19] That is, the subject derives enjoyment from attempting the impossible task of filling the gap in himself and in the field of the Other with a particular object cause of his desire (e.g., profit) that is made available by his entrance into the symbolic order. The way in which the subject's desire is articulated tells us that he is rendered masculine by the discourse. The Master at the level of the unconscious does not know what causes his desire since he does not know that he is marked by the lack instituted by symbolic castration. Despite the self-identified semblance to the contrary, the Master can never be satisfied since he is split by entrance into the symbolic order thus is only ever able to experience *phallic enjoyment.* It is the split subject that is the driving force of the Master's discourse and in this precise sense he is turned into a passive object of the Other's enjoyment.

On the other hand, the Slave, in this same scenario, is necessarily primordially repressed in relation to the self-identified Master. The Slave learns something about who s/he is upon her/his entrance into the symbolic order and produces some knowledge. By obeying the Master's demands the Slave, as a battery of knowledge, gives meaning to his demands. However, the Slave's knowledge is irrelevant to the Master insofar as all things are working well for him. The Slave provides some support to fill the gaps created by the failure of the Master's universality and consistency by unconsciously repressing or giving up her/his enjoyment, his/her fruit of labor, and making this surplus (*object a*) available not to him/herself but to the Master. Thus, this symmetrical relationship at the level of

---

[19] For example, "Christmas" can be considered the master-signifier during a particular season in a particular society. It produces what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick called the "Christmas effect" (as cited by Gibson-Graham, 1996, p. viii) by enabling all the institutions of the society somehow signifies itself. See chapter 3 in Žižek (1989) for further discussion.

the positivity exists only by precluding the Master's fundamental ignorance of his own lack and the Slave's primordial repression, alienation, or displacement from her/his knowledge and enjoyment. However, in order for the Master to be the Master and for the Slave to be the Slave, both require the existence of the primordially repressed Slave and the fantasizing Master respectively. This relationship is thus symmetrical insofar as each needs the other. In other words, both *intersubjectify* each other. The Master's excessive demand, the Slave's repression, and endless series of new signifiers constitute *symptoms* of the Master's discourse insofar as the enunciation of the Master is always necessarily attended by an unrecognized surplus.

To sum up, the Master's speech act is the founding speech act of every social link (discourse) since it exemplifies the alienating functioning of any signifier to which any speaking subjects are subjected (Fink, 1995). This hidden formation of fantasy prefigures the ultimate, unavoidable but deferrable failure of the Master's discourse. The University discourse develops the network of knowledge that sustains the intersubjective, symmetrical, relationship between the Master and the Other in the Master's discourse. Let us now turn to discuss the University discourse.

The University Discourse

The formula for the University discourse is formed by rotating the subject, the master-signifier, the knowledge and the surplus enjoyment one step counter-clockwise from their positions in the Master's discourse. The position of the agent that is occupied by neutral knowledge (S_2) —a detached professor for example— who educates the

remainder of the real (a), in this case, a naïve student.[20] Again, the position from which the professor enunciates is historically power laden. The master-signifier (S_1), which occupies the position of hidden truth, is an authoritative disciplinary knowledge well exemplified by the great books given to the naïve student by the professor. By representing the master-signifier for the naïve student within this historically hierarchical structure, the professor merely rationalizes the disciplinary power/knowledge. On the other hand, the student comes to embody the knowledge conveyed in the hierarchical symbolization process. Through the operation of the University discourse the knowledge passed on by the professor is rationalized, and the student comes to identify herself on the terms of the network of knowledge provided by this discourse. The student, who is acted upon by the University discourse, is produced as a subject by the disciplinary power/knowledge within this discourse and is expected to fill the gap in (or secure the stability of) the Master's discourse by continuously covering over the left over, the remainder or the surplus necessarily produced in the Master's discourse. The successful University discourse produces a subject (the bottom right) who identifies himself with and through the supposed-to-be coherent knowledge of the discourse. This subject comes to desire objects valued by the power/knowledge network of development directly and thus is rendered masculine by the discourse. In so doing the subject produced in the University discourse provides conditions of existence for the Master's universality and consistency.

The Hysteric's Discourse

	agent	→	other		S	→	S_1
↑	——		—— ↓	↑	—		— ↓
	truth	//	production		a	//	S_2

[20] To be sure, professors can occupy positions in any of four discourses. Professors I am referring here is those professors who rationalize disciplinary power/knowledge.

Rotating all the elements of the Master's discourse one-step clockwise, we have the Hysteric discourse. In the Hysteric discourse, the hysterical subject (S) who is rendered feminine by the discourse occupies the position of the agent precisely because she is blocked, separated from the *object a*, thus, she is unable to fantasize, and with the loss of that fantasy the order that fantasy secured within the symbolic order is disrupted. By this, she exhibits a symptom that is a manifestation of the fact that she is internally inconsistent. This is why the *object a*, the remainder of the real that is produced by the Master's discourse and papered over by his fantasy, in this formation is both hidden and occupies the position of the truth. The hysterical subject, let us say an incurable patient who has been failed by physicians who cultivated false hope many times, is traumatized by being unable to recognize the sense of, and is, therefore, unable to follow the demand of the Other (the doctor). The *object a* as the truth is represented in the hysterical patient, who is trying desperately and futilely to recognize and respond to his demand. The desire of the feminine subject is that the Other (the doctor) demonstrates his knowledge of her, to know who she is. But no matter how hard she tries, his enunciations about, his demands of her to embody a particular subjectivity are not satisfying due to the lack intrinsic to the symbolic castration necessary for her entrance into the symbolic order. In the end she comes to realize that the doctor does not have the knowledge she seeks. In this condition what is produced is the unconscious knowledge that she is reduced to an object of the doctor's enjoyment and/or that she provides conditions of the doctor's symbolic existence by sustaining his disciplinary power/knowledge. However, this knowledge is not directly accessible to the hysterical subject in the Hysteric's discourse.

The Analyst's Discourse

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{agent} & \rightarrow & \text{other} \\ \uparrow & & \downarrow \\ \text{truth} & // & \text{production} \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccc} \text{a} & \rightarrow & \text{S} \\ \uparrow & & \downarrow \\ \text{S}_2 & // & \text{S}_1 \end{array}$$

The fourth discourse is the Analyst's discourse, which is created by rotating all the elements of the discourse of the Master two steps clockwise. Please keep in mind that the barred subject who occupies the position of the other is the hysterical subject who is rendered feminine in the Hysteric's discourse. The knowledge of the analyst is that which is inaccessible to the hysterical subject: what she is for the Master. This knowledge of the analyst is represented by the *object a*, the analyst, for another signifier, the hysterical subject. The analyst, as the agent, embodies the *object a* of the hysterical subject that calls on her to confront the truth of her desire. By this, the analyst helps the hysterical subject to face that which is her lack in relation to the Master, or, stated differently, that which causes her desire although the analyst cannot exactly know what the hysterical subject is for the Master. The analyst helps the hysterical subject to see and to challenge the blockages the subject has internally constructed in order to fill in the gap between the Master and herself. The knowledge of the analyst, occupying the position of the truth, is therefore not the neutral objective knowledge in the University discourse, but the political knowledge that cares for the hysterical subject in the truth of her subject position (Žižek, 1998). What the analyst does is to reverse the hysterical subject's fantasy (see the upper level of the analyst discourse: a→$) . By making the hysterical subject confront her *object a*, this operation allows the subject to see the relationship between the Master and herself, how she is unconsciously subjected to the phallic signifier. In so doing, the analyst, thus, breaks the chain of "intersubjective dialectics of desire" (Žižek, 1998, p. 81), the symmetrical relationship between the two (i.e. the Master—the Slave) that sustains the

network of the Master's domination, in other words, the conditions of the Master's existence. What is produced in this symbolization process is the master-signifier or a new master-signifier that relates to the hysterical subject in a new way.

Lacan also identifies that the visible top part of this discourse shares the same matheme as that of perversion. The pervert knows too well what he is for the Other: he is for the Other's enjoyment and this knowledge supports his position. The pervert wants the Other to enjoy within an impossible fantasy. He reduces himself to an *object a* for the Other and attempts to cover over antagonisms within the Other. In so doing, he derives impossible enjoyment. What we should not miss is the crucial difference between the analyst and the pervert. In contrast to the analyst, what the pervert does is not to break but to maintain the chain of "intersubjective dialectics of desire." This subject position is, as I see it, becoming more common today in the field of development and is severely undertheorized within not only mainstream but also the leftist development discourse.

Having briefly described the basic formations of the Lacanian four discourses, I will now examine women's empowerment via microfinance through the logic of the Lacan's four discourses and anti-essentialist Marxist theory. As I did in this section, I will take up each of the discourses in turn.

Reading Women's Empowerment via Microfinance Through Lacan's Four Discourses

The Master's Discourse: Discourse of Inclusion via Microfinance

	agent	→	other		S_1	→	S_2	(the positivity)
↑	——		——	↓	↑ —		—	↓
	truth	//	production		$\$$	//	a	(the negativity)

Development (with a capital D) emerged after World War II and can be identified as one of the social fantasies that cover over antagonisms (inconsistencies and instabilities)

created by long-standing yet continuously shifting class struggles within the symbolic order.[21] In modern society, Development is facilitated through the creation of a certain symbolic authority (*ego ideal*) with which subjects of Development regardless of their symbolic positions can identify. While changes in context have shaped the manifestation of this fantasmatic scenario it is the Developed, be they from either the North or the South, embodying a certain symbolic authority that act as the Master of Development facilitating the civilization of the Other, the Underdeveloped, through the imperialist masculine logic that all should be developed through western capitalist development. The Underdeveloped are forced to accept the subordinate symbolic position. That is, the Developed and the Underdeveloped are differently subjected to the Law of Development. Let us examine this relationship between the Developed and the Underdeveloped as seen in the discourse of inclusion within mainstream development. Again, please keep in mind that the four positions are prior to the commonly understood biological sex or social construction of gender.

For the Developed the relationship is non-contradictory. The speech entitled "The Challenge of Inclusion" by James Wolfensohn, World Bank president, at the Annual Meeting of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund in 1997 can be identified as a good example of an enunciation by someone who speaks from the position of the Master of within Development. He stated that

> Our goal must be to reduce disparities across and within countries, to bring more and more people into the economic mainstream, to promote equitable access to the benefits of development, regardless of nationality, race, or gender. This– The

---

[21] Social fantasy can be defined as "a necessary counterpart to the concept of antagonism, a scenario filling out the voids of the social structure, maskingits constitutive antagonism by the fullness of enjoyment" (Žižek, 1990, p. 254).

> Challenge of Inclusion – is the key development challenge of our time. (as cited in Bergeron, 2003, p. 157)

The position from which the Developed Master speaks is already historically power laden and the power shapes both what the Developed Master says and its effects on the Underdeveloped Other. In this speech Wolfensohn acted like a self-identified Master and articulated those who are his servants; the poor, particularly women, who, for example, never had running water and toilets at home and/or have never been able to open bank accounts; and what they need, inclusion into the economic mainstream. Here the class blind, capitalocentric language, constituted partly by neoclassical economics, obscures and renders normative the content of the signifier "the economic mainstream," but it is unquestionably capitalism.[22]

One assumption of this discourse of capitalism is that it is the result of a teleological transition from a precapitalist state. Microfinance for poor women is identified as a good strategy to stimulate precapitalist economies and those economic activities by women are thought eventually to contribute to capitalist development. Another assumption is that a capitalist (global) economy is constructed as efficient once its constraints are removed. Thus, it is the removal of these constraints that the Developed Master demands in order to achieve Development. The poor, those outside of Development, are thought of as one of those constraints.

The idea that integration into a capitalist economy via, for example, microfinance contributes to women's subordination is repressed. It is always culture or tradition (e.g., local patriarchal culture) that subordinates women not, for example, development(alist) activities. This holds true even when a development(alist) activity actively grafts onto

---

[22] See Wolff (2003) for discussions of class blindness in the World Bank literature.

artifacts of this culture by, for example, drawing on "social capital"(Bergeron, 2003) insofar as it economizes the energy of the Developed Master and satisfies his demand. Also, the practice of "inclusion" in Development via microfinance is, despite its naming, exclusive: those who are too poor to save are excluded from participating in savings groups (see further Chapter 3 of this dissertation). Further, exclusion from the economic mainstream means more than what it literally means. Capitalocentric economic essentialism enables the Developed Master to equate one's non-existence in capitalist market to the absence of social existence. In other words, what is articulated here is that one must be a subject of capitalism, at least in the eyes of the Developed Master, in order to be recognized as having social existence within the symbolic order of capitalist development or Development.

Space outside of Development threatens the Master. This is why we have Wolfensohn's "challenge of inclusion." He, in other words, has made the excessive demand that all without exception should be included within Development. The context within which Wolfensohn has made the excessive demand is the field of development that has experienced the negative effects of structural adjustment programs, such as the shrinking of the social safety net provided by Third World governments for their poor and observed activisms (feminist and otherwise) against these programs. Within this context women, particularly those women who have been most harmed by Development, have been identified as their best economic bet. The theories and technologies of social capital and microfinance now hegemonic have been created with the intent of enrolling these women in Development. These have been created as nodal points through which the Developed hope to buckle up the antagonisms that threaten Development. In this scenario, the term inclusion functions as the master-signifier and by embodying the

master-signifier Wolfensohn appeared fully to enunciate who these women were, what they should do to be included, and ultimately what brings Development. Here we see that Wolfensohn acted as *pure drive* who is wholly conscious yet strictly following the Law.

The existence of the Developed Master requires the existence of the Other – the Underdeveloped, poor women in this case, who take subordinated positions in Development. Let us now look at the other side: from a perspective of the Underdeveloped, a poor woman, who is called into action in Development by its Master. The following voice of a woman named Bashiranbibi from South Asia quoted by Wolfensohn at the end of his 1999 Annual Meeting speech is telling.

> At first I was afraid of everyone and everything: my husband, the village, the police. Today I fear no one. I have my own bank account. I am the leader of my village's savings group. I tell my sisters about our movement. (as cited in Bergeron, 2003, p. 157)

She, who used to be thought of as occupying a position outside of Development, recognized herself and was recognized by the Developed as "included" once she, for example, opened a back account and joined a savings group. She has become part of Development. In other words, she accepted her position in the symbolic order as the once-excluded-now-part-of "'vulnerable populations'" (World Bank as cited in Bergeron, 2003, p. 161) in need of (capitalist) development. Here we see that she was also subjected to the Law albeit differently.

This relationship between the Developed Master and the Underdeveloped Other is symmetrical – non-contradictory – insofar as the Underdeveloped appears to act on what the Developed demands that the latter recognizes and attends to his demand as seen in the eyes of the former. The Developed, Wolfensohn, appeared to be self-identified due to portrayals of Development and its universal function. This is supported by the woman

depicted in the speech who retroactively gave a meaning to the Developed: the strategy he came up with to include those who were excluded from Development, microfinance, was working, and in so doing her speech stabilized his identity. The Developed, Wolfensohn, would have thought that his demand was fully completed by the woman recipient and would have experienced enjoyment that derived from solidifying his identity as the Master, securing his job/income and fulfilling his desire to be good, by turning her into a passive object, an instrument for his enjoyment.

However, Lacanian psychoanalysis enables us to identify this symmetrical relationship as a *semblance*. This scenario necessarily represses and is necessarily supported by *fantasy* ($S \lozenge a$), Development — the notion of a modern imperialist ideal in which all should be developed, that is, included in the capitalist symbolic order. The truth is that the Developed who speaks from the position of the Master (Wolfensohn in the positivity) is split ($\mathbb{S}$), meaning marked by the symbolic lack. The master-signifier, inclusion, through the speeches by the self-identified Developed represents the subject, who is positioned in his unconscious, for another signifier, the once-excluded-and-now-subordinated Underdeveloped, a poor woman recipient of microfinance. While his speech appears to be pure drive and the master of meaning in his conscious, it produces surplus that escapes symbolization due to, and contrary to the appearance of, the internal negativity of the Developed. In other words, the Developed embodies the alienating function of the signifier.

The internal negativity of the Developed and the surplus produced in the signification process imply a gap between the Developed, Wolfensohn, and the Underdeveloped, the woman client. In order to maintain the semblance of the harmonious relationship an imaginary fantasmatic scenario, Development, covers over

this gap. At the level of the positivity, the speaking agent demands that all should be included into the capitalist symbolic order. This is fully satisfied by the Underdeveloped when, as is necessary within the Masters' discourse, he does not know what he says, what he intends is not the truth of what he says, and his speech conveys something extra, unknown to him. In the unconscious the split subject neurotically questions his ability to govern the symbolic order and attempts to normalize his demand by covering up the gap with endless proliferations of new theories and technologies in order to maintain his identity as the Master. Microfinance for poor women is one of these endless attempts to buckle up the gap created by the internal negativity of the Developed and the surplus in this impossible social relationship. He is split from his own desire as a consequence of entering the symbolic order so his desire can never be fully satisfied; thus, he can only ever experience enjoyment temporally by covering up his internal negativity with these endless attempts. It is in part the enjoyment he experiences from this impossible pursuit that keeps him engaged in Development. In so doing, the pursuit of this enjoyment also serves to sustain the chain of "intersubjective dialectics of desire" between the Developed and the Underdeveloped, a chain in which the Underdeveloped reliably desires what is valued by the Law of Development. This interplay defers recognition of the antagonisms inherent within Development.

What the Master does in his unconscious is externalize his own limit. He is unable to recognize that he is not the Master but that he is a servant who is merely turned into a passive object, an instrument for the Other's enjoyment by the Law of Development. The truth is that he is the driving force of this discourse. The enjoyment he experiences is contingent on his ignorance of this social relationship: he does and can not know that he is turned into a passive object for the Other's enjoyment and he cannot know who the

woman recipients are both because they are too heterogeneous to comprehend and because they are, like him, split: something in them also always escapes symbolization.

One remainder that continuously falls outside of the process of symbolization in Development is the subaltern. The subaltern is a special signifier used to indicate the surplus, that which cannot be symbolized within Development. The Underdeveloped (the woman recipient quoted above) is primordially repressed in relation to the Developed. When she enters into Development she is turned into a passive object of the Other's enjoyment. The newly created Underdeveloped learns something about who she is by accepting the delimitations found in the enunciation of the Developed and, thus, produces statements that the Developed, and therefore the Underdeveloped, recognize as knowledge. These are exemplified in the assertions of empowerment cited above. However, her knowledge and labor are only relevant to the self-identified Developed (and again to her on the terms of her new-found identity as the Underdeveloped) insofar as she can be seen to benefit her families, her self-help groups and those communities in ways identified as legitimate by the Developed. She exists to the extent that she does what the Developed demands from her. Her knowledge and labor that are irrelevant to the Developed are not symbolized in Development. This fundamental alienation from her own knowledge and labor produces an inassimilable surplus (*object a*) – the subaltern – which is invisible within the discourse. In this historically hierarchical discourse the knowledge and labor of the Underdeveloped are quietly appropriated by the Developed without acknowledgement. Alienation from her own surplus is the price the Underdeveloped pays in order to enter Development. This surplus creates antagonisms within Development.

The task of the subjects of Development, be they the Developed or the Underdeveloped, is to bring this surplus, the subaltern, fully into symbolization. The unrelenting pursuit of this impossible goal through the continual production of new theories and technologies within Development, however, defers indefinitely the need to confront this impossibility. The subaltern, thus, becomes an object whose continuous attempted articulation within the social fantasy of Development masks the internal lack of the subjects of development, supports the continued existence of Development, and serves as the object from which the subjects of development derive considerable enjoyment.

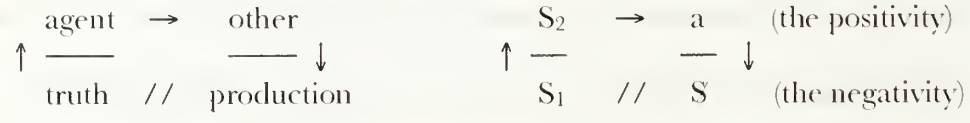
Class can be considered another such remainder. In the post-World War II context during the Cold War, the Master's 'No!' (prohibition) was not limited to Communism. Development emerged as a social fantasy not only to fight against the spread of Communism but also to spread Capitalism throughout the Third World. Class qua surplus makes exploitation a visible and necessary component of capitalism, feudalism and slavery. Within this analysis exploitative class structures exclude producers of surplus (i.e., direct laborers in capitalism, serfs in feudalism and slaves in slavery) from appropriating their own surplus. This same Marxian perspective also provides a powerful mechanism by which it is possible to illuminate the injustices involved in the struggle over the distribution of surplus (Chakrabarti & Cullenberg, 2003; DeMartino, 2003). Symbolic interventions, such as class analysis, must be rendered unthinkable, must be kept at bay, must continually be deferred if conditions necessary for the existence of Development are to be maintained.

The absence of class within Development ensures that its subjects can never encounter one fundamental antagonism. This encounter would hazard the destitution of their symbolic positions within and the disintegration of the Development that secures

their identities. The circumscribed enjoyment the split subject of development experiences within Development ensures that he never encounters such traumatic enjoyments (i.e., appropriating his own surplus labor). The unconscious desire to avoid such traumatic encounters in part explains the endless proliferation of new development theories and technologies which temporarily cover over the internal negativity with a fantasmatic scenario. These endless productions of new theories and technologies, excessive demands by the Developed, and those remainders that continuously fall outside of symbolization process, such as the subaltern and class, can be identified as symptoms of this discourse that signal ultimate and consistent failures of the Developed.

It is not possible to shed light on the fantasmatic formation discussed here from the terrain made available within a historicist analytic. It is precisely the political possibilities that may flow from this exploration that I consider to be a substantial contribution that Lacanian psychoanalysis can bring to the study of development today. Development as fantasy is sustained by the network of knowledge produced in the University discourse, which in turn supports and disguises the semblance of social relationship between the Developed and the Underdeveloped. Let us now turn to discuss the University discourse.

The University Discourse: Development via Microfinance as Modern Pedagogical Mechanisms



Microfinance as a pedagogical mechanism through which non-creditworthy irrational Third World women learn a particular disciplinary power/knowledge and become creditworthy rational economic client-subjects has been intensively studied by

post-development critics.[23] But why does an individual, who winds up serving as an instrument for Development, come to obey the Law of Development and maintain the semblance of the social relationship discussed above? What does Lacanian psychoanalysis tell us about this?

Development, in a manner similar to the functioning of Louis Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) (2001 [1971]), deploys "modern scientific and technical knowledge" (Truman as cited in Escobar, 1995, p. 3) in combination with repressive methods, such as examinations, tenure or performance reviews or group lending, to discipline both its shepherds (e.g., professors or the development officer), and its flocks (e.g., students or microfinance "clients"). Psychoanalysis tells us that the role of enjoyment, which is undertheorized by both Althusser in his discussion of ISAs (Žižek, 1989) and post-development critics, is crucial.

Let us look at this relationship first in the context of the First World (also the First World in the so-called developing countries), which is oft-unexamined by post-development analyses, in order to expose and transform transnational intersubjective dialectics of desire. The position of the agent in this discourse is occupied by what is considered to be the neutral knowledge of the Master of Development (S_2). Occupying a historically power laden position the agent, for example, a professor of development, teaches a naïve student (a), one who is not yet enchained with the Law of Development, objective development theory, such as theory of social capital. The student then becomes a subject of Development through their unconscious reliance on the master-signifier (S_1), for example, through their inclusion, in their professor's performance. What he does is

[23] See Brigg (2001a), Chowdhury (2001), Rankin (2001) and Triantafillou and Nielsen (2001) for example.

convey the knowledge of the Master hidden in the authoritative books: the knowledge of how to develop all by including those who are excluded from the capitalist symbolic order into that order. For this microfinance for the poor, particularly women, is identified as a good empowerment strategy because it is thought to integrate the poor into the mainstream capitalist symbolic order. The professor teaches specific knowledge and skills, in combination with repressive methods (e.g., examinations). He, for example, teaches how to plan, implement and evaluate microfinance activities, how to write proposals and reports, how to give orders. His student will later be required to demonstrate this knowledge in exams and use it, for example as a development expert involved in microfinance projects. By positioning himself as a neutral instrument the professor does nothing but legitimize and rationalize the Law of Development.

On the other hand, the student is represented as the *object a* because she is raw, uncultivated, naïve in a sense that she is unable yet to embody properly the expectations of the disciplinary power/knowledge found within the discourse of the Master. To the extent that she is not disciplined, she falls outside of the Law and to the extent that she wishes to pass a course with a good grade, she is forced to make herself available to receive and then embody the knowledge of the Master hidden in the authoritative texts conveyed by the professor. In so doing, she comes to embody the Law. She does this by subordinating herself to the sadistic compulsion of her moral law (*superego*), the egoistic enjoyment available prior to embodying the Law of Development.[24] She incrementally gives up these egoistic enjoyments by, for example, substituting the enjoyments of sitting

[24] *Superego*, which is "a correlate of [symbolic] castration" (Jacques Lacan, 1998 , p. 7), functions as a demonic agency that commands subjects to go beyond the Law and experience absolute enjoyment, however, it simultaneously prohibits them from accessing it.

up late studying and attending early morning classes for those of drinking late and sleeping in.

In attempting to embody the correct knowledge of Development she creates a symbolic role model for herself on the terms valued by the Other (*ego ideals*). What makes her keep striving is the enjoyment she comes to experience in the process of her attempts to attain an ideal symbolic identity, her *ego ideal*, as, for example, an A student. She realizes this goal insofar as she embodies and reflects back the expectations of the knowledge of the Master as conveyed to her by the professor. She also gains symbolic esteem and respect from achieving this identity. In this example, interpellation is successful when the student fantasizes herself as an autonomous, as free of the Law, and as recognizing herself as deciding on the basis of her own judgments. By deferring to the local embodiment of the Law (e.g., the professor), in other words, by obeying the Law, the subject experiences freedom, which is the enjoyment that stems from gaining the symbolically-mediated rewards (i.e., esteem, respect, symbolic position etc) that feed into enjoyment of the Other (i.e., families, professors, capitalists etc.).

Next, let us look at this relationship seen in the representation of the Grameen Bank,[25] which is well-examined by post-development critics. A group who wants to borrow money from the Grameen Bank first needs to memorize the rules and regulations of the bank and then pass an oral examination (Rahman, 1999). Here the bank officer who introduces the rules and regulations of the bank conveys neutral knowledge (S_2), and a poor woman who is excluded by any official credit activity elsewhere, occupies the

[25] A widely influential pioneer microcredit institution that emerged in the 1980's in Bangladesh. Its founder, Prof. Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006.

position of the remainder of the real (a). She is forced to identify herself with the knowledge conveyed by the development spokesperson in order to become a member of Grameen community. For example, she is required to recite the sixteen disciplinary imperatives by the bank at the beginning of the weekly meeting:

1. We shall follow and advance the four principles of Grameen Bank—Discipline, Unity, Courage and Hard Work—in all walks of our lives.
2. We shall bring prosperity to our families.
3. We shall not live in dilapidated houses. We shall repair our houses and work towards constructing new houses at the earliest.
4. We shall grow vegetables all the year round. We shall eat plenty of them and sell the surplus.
5. During the plantation season, we shall plant as many seedlings as possible.
6. We shall plan to keep our families small.
7. We shall educate our children and ensure that we can earn to pay for their education.
8. We shall always keep our children clean.
9. We shall build and use pit-latrines.
10. We shall drink water from tubewells. If it is not available, we shall boil water or use alum.
11. We shall not take any dowry at our daughters' wedding. We shall keep the center free from the curse of dowry. We shall not practice child marriage.
12. We shall not inflict any injustice on anyone, neither shall we allow anyone to do so.
13. We shall collectively undertake bigger investments for higher incomes.
14. We shall always be ready to help each other. If anyone is in difficulty, we shall all help him or her.
15. If we come to know of any breach of discipline in any center, we shall go there and help restore discipline.
16. We shall introduce physical exercise in all our centers. We shall take part in all social activities collectively.

(as cited in Chowdhury, 2001, p. 409-10)

In attempting to become a member of Grameen community, subjects come to create *ego ideals* (symbolic authority), desirable symbolic role models in their identifications with the signifiers within the surrounding discourses, for example, the ideal woman constructed in the Grameen Bank's sixteen imperatives cited above, "businesswoman" (Leach & Sitaram, 2002, p. 581) or "the active and responsible citizen" (Triantafillou & Nielsen, 2001, p. 78). Yet, her entrance into this symbolic order, as with all such

transitions, necessarily involves repression. She strives after her contextually constructed symbolic authority by saying "No!" to the imperative "Enjoy!" (*superego*) that prohibits her egoistic enjoyment and by submitting herself to the Law of Development. It is an ethical response, for she tries to be good not only by becoming a member and contributing to her family (and community and nation) with her labor but also by not giving any trouble to her group and family members.[26]

But, why does she want to become a member of Grameen community even though this requires her to repress her own desire? It is due partly to the enjoyment available in the symbolic order that she strives to experience. Through the signification process she learns something, she comes to embody the knowledge of the Master through acting according to the suggestions of the bank officer. From her review of the film entitled *Sixteen Decisions* about the philosophies of Grameen Bank, Chowdhury (2001) observed that the conversations with Grameen members in the film revealed the fact that the key needs identified by these members were without exception food, housing, education and self-reliance, all of which are specified in the sixteen imperatives. The lack in these subjects is saturated with context specific objects cause of desire, such as food, housing, education and/or self-reliance (Chowdhury, 2001) and these subjects experience considerable enjoyment, albeit temporary, from their pursuit. Here we see that what the subject comes to desire depends on the ways in which s/he is articulated in language. As the subject desires these objects directly, she, is rendered masculine within the discourse.

A woman, who was once uncultivated, outside of Development, becomes a creditworthy rational subject of Development. She comes to enact the knowledge of the

[26] Copjec (1994) and Spivak (1988b) pointed out that Foucault's analysis missed how the subject first rejects her/his desire.

Master: microfinance brings Development to those poor Third World women who are excluded from the capitalist symbolic order. From a Lacanian perspective, these clients can be called "phallic women." Those who are wholly articulated by the phallic signifier at the level of their positivity. They became the agents/subjects in the Master's discourse by covering over their respective constitutive lack with a series of objects cause of desire made available to them as a consequence of their entering into Development. They fantasize that if they fully respond to the demands by the Developed, that is, they save, start small business and benefit her families and communities, they will gain the freedom identified as theirs within Development ($\$ \lozenge a$). They strive for the impossible enjoyment that flows from the process of attempting to achieve an object. In so doing, the power/knowledge of development, that is the Developed-driven capitalist led civilization through its hegemony, is legitimized and rationalized within the University discourse.

That is not the end of the story. In both cases, the subject who is produced in the University discourse, is, at the same time, unconsciously *hystericized*. On entering the symbolic order she was marked by the lack and her entrance into the symbolic order of development both reshapes this internal negativity and allows her consciously to identify and be identified as a coherent individual at the level of her positivity. This internal negativity constantly interferes with the stable identification of the subject within its fantasmatic scenario. It precipitates the subject's hysterical questioning of the Law. This unconscious, yet, hysterical questioning, for example, may in part contribute to the now familiar endless elaboration of new theories and technologies whose pursuit stabilizes for a while the Development that necessarily represses her unconscious wishes and images as seen in the Master's discourse. She paradoxically, comes to fear the resolution of her questions insofar as this would result in the end to her enjoyment. As such, she finds

special enjoyment in her inability to resolve the questions precipitated by the internal negativity, and this repetitive failure itself becomes a source of libidinal enjoyment. In experiencing both symbolically-mediated and covert libidinal enjoyment, she provides conditions of existence for Development at the cost of hystericizing herself.

There is yet another way to read this subject production. As I have shown in the previous section, the subject so produced should not be read simply as the product of disciplinary power/knowledge. Instead, the term subject should be understood as pertaining to the "excess" or the "indivisible remainder" (Žižek, 1998, p. 78) which, by its very nature, escapes the determination of power/knowledge. The subject of the lack necessarily misrecognizes the disciplinary power/knowledge. For example, in the eyes of the Developed, a women client of microfinance projects is acting on his demand: she saves money and starts small business, and on making profit on her independent capital contributes to welfare of her family and community. This is what is expected by the Developed. However, when she misrecognizes the Developed's demand she might find a special enjoyment in appropriating her own surplus labor as being a self-employed, independent commodity producer and stay as an independent. That is, her class process does not transform from independent to capitalist as prescribed by the Master of Development.[27] Or, she might find a special enjoyment in (unknowingly or even actively) engaging in communal class process in which she and others collectively produce and appropriate surplus labor that could threaten conditions of existence for Development. Thus, the acts of consistent failure as well as misrecognition can be read as her

[27] Gabriel (1990) has argued that there is no guarantee that precapitalist class structures, in particular, the independent (or "ancient"), will transform into a capitalist class structure.

unconscious enjoyment of the freedom found in resisting fully to conform to the Law of Development. Both the hysteria embodied by the subject and the necessary misrecognition of the disciplinary power/knowledge by the subject signify the *remainders*, the something that escapes symbolization, in the University discourse and can be read as a symptom of this discourse.

The modern subject of development is necessarily blind to his subjection to the Law of Development. By obeying the Law of Development, and by deriving enjoyment from such obedience, this historically power-laden pedagogical operation interpellates the undisciplined individual (e.g., naïve student or poor woman) as an appropriate and self-identifying subject whose actions maintain the chain of "intersubjective dialectics of desire" between the Developed Master and the Underdeveloped Other that sustains Development. The disciplinary power/knowledge *in combination with* enjoyment forces the subject of development to avoid the problematic of how he is ideologically interpellated and how he relates to his own excesses, such as those of surplus labor, and the relations that derive from this process (Althusser, 2001 [1971]). With this the subject provides conditions of existence for Development (and in consequence Capitalism/Imperialism). Blind subjection to the Law is the price the subject must pay for entering the symbolic order of development. However, this same subject misrecognizes the disciplinary power/knowledge operation. The subject produced in the University discourse acts in manners that may be understood both to maintain the symbolic order in which she is a subject and also to subvert that order. That is, the psychoanalytic perspective tells us that the power/knowledge of development can never fully close on itself. It necessarily produces significant instabilities within its very heart. In sharp contrast to the terrifying power of Development found in the work of some post-development authors, this

psychoanalytic reading enables us to see Development as fragile and as radically contingent.

Having discussed the subject position from the viewpoint of the University, I will next discuss the subject position from the viewpoint of the hysterical subject.

The Hysteric's Discourse: The Truth of Governmentalization

	agent	→	other		S	→	S_1 (the positivity)
↑	——		—— ↓	↑	—		— ↓
	truth	//	production		a	//	S_2 (the negativity)

The agent of this discourse is the subject (S) produced in the University discourse and disguised in the self-identified Developed of the Master's discourse whose internal negativity is exposed at the level of her positivity, thus, she is unable to fantasize. The position of the agent is occupied by a feminine subject since the dominant position of this discourse (the position of agent) contains the real in the form of split subject. Consider a woman recipient of microfinance activity who is traumatized by the fact that she is unable to follow the demands of the Developed, in this case, the microfinance operating NGO officer. Finding her life made abject by the increase of domestic violence committed by male partners jealous of her access to resources, competition within her savings group, and/or impossible debt resulting from her participation in microfinance programs (Leach & Sitaram, 2002; Rahman, 1999), for example, she starts seriously questioning her knowledge, the knowledge she gained in the microfinance program: she questions what she has done wrong and what she is missing. By way of example provided by Leach and Sitaram (2002) some scheduled caste women were loaned money from an NGO to participate in the silk-reeling industry as independent entrepreneurs in Karnataka State in Southern India. In the beginning they experienced many positive changes, increase of their self-esteem, mobility, respect in the community partly due to the fact that they

started making their own income as independent entrepreneurs. In this phase, they were masquerading, modeling themselves on the pattern of their *ego ideals*, "successful businesswoman," which covered over their internal negativity as well as antagonisms within Development, while they experienced impossible enjoyment by rendering themselves as the instruments for the enjoyment of the Other (such as their families, developers, nation etc.).

Yet, as Lacanian psychoanalysis helps us recognize, these masquerades always fail. The case of the Indian women discussed above is not an exception. The symptoms of these impossible attempts presented differently in different phases of the development of the microfinance program. In the beginning the symptoms appeared in the forms of their complaints of excessive work, physical exhaustion, the use of their children's labor, complaints of their male partners. After the first two months of its operation when they hit the first hurdle, symptoms appeared in the forms of increased debt, serious despair among group members, and the anger of their male partners. After the ninth month even, when their business improved with some adjustments, the symptoms took the form of a significant level of debt. From the ninth month on, with their numerous failures, these women protested to the NGO officer that what the NGO told them to do, what the NGO thought to be right for them, did not totally work for them. They demanded that the NGO allow them to operate individually until the NGO acknowledged that the collective purchase of cocoons and sale of silk had not yielded positive results for them in the form of profit, the term the Master of Development via the NGO officer could recognize. In this scenario, the persistent protest by hysterical women recipients (S) was severe enough to change the mind of the self-identified NGO (S_1). They successfully directly challenged its ability to be the neutral conveyor of the unquestionable

knowledge of the Master of Development disguised within authoritative development theory and practice. The NGO, in turn, came to question this knowledge and to modify it. What was produced in this specific operation is the modified knowledge (S_2) that individual operation works better.

What enabled this production of the modified knowledge? It was the real (*object a*), paradoxes and contradictions of striving for perfect Development, which appeared in the position of truth, unveiled by the hysterical subjects as the driving force for governmentalization of Development[28]: an endless quest to include all people into the capitalist symbolic order.[29] Here, too, enjoyment plays a crucial role. The hysterical subject, who is rendered feminine by the discourse insofar as she exhibits the real at the level of the positivity, does not desire an object directly like the masculine subjects in the Master's and University's discourses. Instead, she desires for the Other's enjoyment, she wants to render herself an instrument to cover over antagonisms within the Other. Continuing the example above, the hysterical subject derived impossible enjoyment from her hysterical questioning and the production of a modified knowledge through which she once again, temporarily, was able to fantasize Development. Once again she offered

---

[28] There is a parallel between how Lacan described the scientific discourse and how I see the development discourse. Lacan (1990) first identified the scientific discourse with the Master's discourse but in his later years pointed out that the scientific discourse and the hysteric's discourse share almost the same structure.

[29] Triantafillou and Nielsen (Triantafillou & Nielsen, 2001) pointed out that a key issue in participatory development projects is the "ceaseless quest to make locals participate" (p. 78). They argued that this "will to participation" is "an issues of normalization" (p. 78). Drawing on Foucault's notion of the technologies of the self, the power-knowledge relations were seen to enable locals to govern themselves through creating new subjectivities and forms of resistance as part of their ethical practices (p. 82). This conclusion is akin to that of psychoanalysis but these undivided subjects are fully the effects of surrounding discourses, thus, wholly governed by a disciplinary power/knowledge.

herself as an instrument to cover over antagonisms within Development. With this, the Developed's identity was also temporarily re-stabilized, the chain of "intersubjective dialectics of desire" between the subject and its Developed Master was temporarily sustained, and the conditions of existence for Development were temporarily secured.

This signification did not produce what Žižek (1998) calls "the unbearable castrating effect" (p. 79). The hysterical subjects presented here could not traumatize the NGO sufficiently to enable it to realize that what it uncritically and transparently possesses was necessarily flawed. This transformation process did not change the hysterical subjects' relationship to Development. These subjects are caught in a closed loop of repetitive searches for social harmony and this cyclical search will provide continued conditions of existence for Development.

However, examination of this oft-unconscious acknowledgement that the hysterical subject who is an object for the Other, can produce politically significant effects within Development. Trading on this unconscious recognition may open up possibilities to destabilize the semblance found in the Master's discourse. Public recognition of this relation, if properly approached, may produce an "unbearable castrating effect." That is, the *object a* represented by the split subject for the Developed can disrupt any universalizing symbolization process supported by the agents of the Master's and University discourses within Development. The overt enunciation by the hysterical woman microfinance client subject addressed to the NGO officer that she was reduced to the status of being his instrument forced him to play a double game; one as the hysterical subject's object of desire and the other as her symbolic Other (the addressee to whom the hysterical subject confesses her desire). Recognition that the NGO was responsible for her hysteria could in turn hystericize the NGO itself. The crucial point here is that

hysterical protest may force him to the point that he realizes that what he internally possesses necessarily and will always provide the conditions necessary for her hysteria (symptom). The term castrating would portray this act precisely. The selfidentified masculine subject, the NGO officer, can be transformed into a feminine one, be hystericized, in this operation. Thus, the hysterical subject can be doubly hystericized: first, she is reduced to an object for the Other's enjoyment; second, she serves as the instrument for the hystericization of the Other. Thus, this hysterical protest, if properly approached, can provide both the hysterical subject and the Other with a space to rethink his/her relationship to Development. This can allow significant destabilization of the semblance found in the Master's discourse and the "intersubjective dialectics of desire" between the subject of Development and its Master thus Development.

So far, we looked at three types of discourses from different subjective viewpoints, that of the Master, the University and that of Hysteria. The last discourse is that of the Analyst, which will provide us with some strategies for destabilizing the Master's discourse, and consequently, the other two discourses as well.

The Analyst's Discourse

	agent	→	other		a	→	S	(the positivity)
↑	——		—— ↓	↑	—		— ↓	
	truth	//	production		S_2	//	S_1	(the negativity)

The analyst has two roles in the development discourse. First, to disrupt the vicious intersubjective dialectical relation with Development by enabling the fantasizing subjects of Development to confront the truth: how the subjects are constituted in relation to the master-signifier of, for example, Inclusion. And second, it is to found a new, different social link between inclusion and other signifiers, such as development, microfinance, Third World women, empowerment, and NGOs by themselves. Let me

identify some who have played analyst's roles within the development discourse. First, I would say that Escobar, a poststructuralist critic of the development discourse, has served as an analyst. In his path-breaking work, *Encountering Development*, Escobar (1995) examined how power/knowledge within the development apparatus has been constructed and how the subjects are unconsciously subordinated to the rules of the Western driven development discourse. Second, Gibson-Graham (1996) has served as analysts by critiquing the capitalocentric tendency within the post-development discourse and pointing out the existence of diverse economic processes other than those of capitalism within the existing field. My third example of an analyst would be Spivak (1999) who identified a secret behind the microfinance movement as the financialization of globe, that is, another word for the coercive process of initiating primitive accumulation in a society where capitalism has not yet achieved the dominant class structure.[30] All these critics, by embodying knowledges that had always escaped from symbolization within Development, enabled the differently fantasizing development subjects to reflect on how we/they are constituted in relation to the master-signifiers, such as Development, Capitalism and/or Inclusion, and to articulate them with other signifiers, such as Eurocentrism, diverse class processes, exploitation, and imperialism. Their analyses allow the differently fantasizing subjects to identify the blockages they/we unconsciously cultivated in order to enjoy fantasmatic fullness of our/their impossible subjectivities. In so doing, they encourage us/the fantasizing subjects to invert our relationship with the master-signifiers, to break the chain of intersubjective dialectical

[30] Elyachar (2002) and Burgeon (2003) draw on Spivak to make a further link between microfinance and the financialization of the globe.

relations between the master-signifiers and its subjects and help the subjects to have a different, new relationship with them.

As I briefly mentioned above, the pervert and the analyst share the same matheme (a→S). It is crucial to differentiate the act of the analyst from that of the pervert, for there is an increasing number of perverts who provide conditions of existence for Development today. The number of these perverts is growing in part due to the well-documented failures of Development. Some subjects of Development have come to disavow the Law. They know that it is incomplete. From a psychoanalytic perspective, these subjects are *perverts* who are not wholly castrated by the Law and lack strong identification with the symbolic authority (i.e., the Developed). The subjectivity of perverts is severely undertheorized within not only mainstream but also post-development discourse. For this reason, I will discuss it in depth below.

I will highlight two different types of perverts here. First, continuing with the example in the previous section, the women entrepreneurs had withdrawn from the program by the time the researchers went back to study them three years later. They had returned to their old work, wage or casual labor. They can be identified as *perverts*, subjects who were not wholly castrated by the symbolic order of development and temporarily withdrew from it while possibly continuing to look for a Master to whom they could totally submit without knowing that there such a Master never exists. Thus, the subjects remained trapped in the vicious "intersubjective dialectics of desire" in which they search endlessly for a fulfilling Master. This pervert exhibits a modern subjectivity insofar as he still looks for a Master.

Let us look at another kind of pervert this time a postmodern kind. In the context of open disavowals of the Law of Development, the term empowerment has emerged as a

new master signifier that fixes inconsistencies exacerbated by failures of Development. Even though they openly disavow this postmodern pervert, as opposed to the modern kind I just discussed above, remain within the symbolic order of development. Within empowerment approaches, a development expert appears to have fidelity not to the self-identified Developed, who deploy the modern approach of domination from the above through the objective knowledge of the Developed, but to the Underdeveloped, in particular, poor Third World women. For example, in many microfinance activities, which are widely considered to be the panacea for poverty reduction through women's empowerment, a development expert at times dedicates himself to women's empowerment by creating women/people-centered approaches, such as participatory, capabilities, self-help and appreciative approaches. He often refuses to invoke their objective knowledge. He, instead, claims that he helps these women empower themselves. He encourages the women to challenge the objective knowledge of the Developed and he undercuts his expert authority by suggesting that they draw on their indigenous knowledges.[31] By way of another example, when an NGO officer at its head office knew too well that all USAID projects were doomed to fail, and that saving-led microfinance activities did not serve the poorest of the poor, he still acted as if USAID funded saving-led microfinance activities would empower women. We could read his actions as prompted by his desire not to offend others, such as the donor, local NGO officers and/or the women clients, who believed in them. In turn, when local NGO officers and/or women clients found out that those activities didn't improve the lives of women or

[31] For example, Women's Empowerment Program Nepal was grafted onto indigenous patterns of saving and credit called 'Dhukuti' (Jeferry Ashe & Parrot, 2001, October). See chapter three of this dissertation for a discussion of this practice.

their families, as they had initially claimed, the local NGO officers still went on pretending they believed in microfinance activities in their official representations (presentation, reports, interviews, and so forth). These NGO officers did not want to offend their counterparts and the donors who, they thought, believed in the ability of USAID funded saving-led microfinance activities to empower women.

What these two examples highlight are the effects stemming from experts' weak identification with the symbolic authority (*ego ideals*, for example, the self-identified Developed), which results in their identification with an imaginary role (*ideal ego*). By playing to the imagined role of a benevolent savior or do-gooder, the empowering experts constitute themselves as wanting to be of service to the women. However, these women/people-centered empowerment approaches should be read as inducing the women/people to enunciate a new law that brings consistency to the symbolic order of development. What makes it possible to have this social bond is that the postmodern perverts derive narcissistic enjoyment from identifying themselves with the imaginary ideal of being of service to the poor women/people. This is accomplished by covering over their imaginary of what the Underdeveloped lack with his benevolent service (a→S). In so doing, they exhibit narcissistic self-admiration: I am of service to the poor women, and he finds himself likable while being of self-proclaimed service. They do not admit that they are an authoritative figure, a master who imposes his authorityon the women. They want to be liked, not feared. They want to see the women empowering themselves behind the simulacra of Development, a social fantasy that they openly disavow.

Although a postmodern pervert denies his authority and wants to identify himsdf as a benevolent savior he, on the other hand, functions as a *superego*, a small master who invisibly supervises his flocks. He refuses to create strict rules/prohibitions to control his

flocks, so he creates conditions within which his subordinates discipline themselves. In the context of women's empowerment via microfinance activities, self-help groups are now expected to self-discipline. This move from discipline from above to discipline from within (postmodern disciplinary power/knowledge)[32] initially seems to create new and alternative possibilities. Groups recognize this move as the expert giving up his authority and as truly believing in their capacities. This mis/recognition encourages groups to act of their own accord to fulfill the unspoken dictates of the imaginary authoritative figure (*superego*). They may, for example, come to enjoy saving, starting a small business and being a self-employed independent commodity producer or petty trader. However, these very possibilities, which are afforded by having no authority, at the same time, cause anxiety for the members of the groups. Mirroring the constant proliferation of development technologies elaborated by the modern development expert, these clients start creating prohibitions for themselves, such as not using the money for smoking and drinking, fining group members who delay payments, and much else. These disciplinary acts can be read as initiated by the group, in part, out of anxiety of not disappointing the imaginary symbolic authority that they themselves created. By playing on members' desire to be good on the terms of their imaginary law, the expert's narcissistic identification of being in fidelity to Third World women and, in consequence, the simulacra of Development – the semblance of the relationship between the Developed and the Underdeveloped – are maintained.

An expert's narcissistic enjoyment comes at the cost of blocking his ability to see the ideological workings of the Development in which he is a mere instrument and how

[32] The Foucauldian post-development literature has highlighted this shift. See Brigg (2001a), Rankin (2001) and Triantafillou and Nielsen (2001) for example.

his action serves to mask its antagonisms. This is apparent in the fact that while the postmodern pervert openly professes disbelief in the (modern) Law of Development, he remains in the symbolic order of development. This is because he partially accepts the Law. He may, for example, accept that women lack literacy skills, legal rights, and economic independence. This partial acceptance also makes him vulnerable. He may fear the sanction of a superior (who may terminate his contract), or he may feel guilty for not being productive. This narcissistic act, therefore, should be thought of as another forced choice. It is his response to anxiety caused by the impotence of the Developed. Although he disavows the Law, this narcissistic act is his way of trying to avoid a traumatic encounter (in this case, the impotence of Third World women) that would lead to the dissolution of his attempt to bring a new law into existence, thus terminating his narcissistic enjoyment.

The official justification for representing oneself as a benevolent savior is respect for the other's difference. However, in this postmodern social bond, a postmodern pervert unconsciously wants to bind women as a law but not the Law. Third World women must remain empowered yet domesticated, victim-like and grateful actors in need of his service. In the end, he wants to position himself as a savior while simultaneously retaining the paycheck and other rewards of remaining within the symbolic order of development. Thus, some aspects of the women are again, necessarily, excluded and are thus rendered part of the surplus, the subaltern which is the perpetual object of assimilation. If the subaltern approaches too close to the Developed, the Developed becomes threatened. The Developed may, for example, fear the loss of their jobs to fully empowered, foreign, dark-skinned experts. This postmodern racism, in which Third World woman is still reduced to an object from which the expert derives narcissistic enjoyment by denying the

Underdeveloped the opportunity to realize her own egoistic enjoyment, has to remain invisible in order to have the social bond that sustains not only Development but also racism and xenophobia.

Also, we cannot afford to miss the fact that this postmodern mission to empower resembles the imperialist civilizing mission. This is clear in the case of empowering women through microfinance activities when their enjoyment is strictly constrained to actions that are blessed by Development. While empowering themselves, for example, by becoming private property owners and self-employed commodity producers, these women are prohibited not only from smoking, drinking, and delaying payment, but they also experience class injustices, for example, being denied their surplus labor, which is (not always, but often) appropriated by others (e.g., their husbands or senior self-help group members). They, thus, remain exploited. Even in the new form where the Law is consciously disavowed and the women, who have been acted on by the Developed, appear to be free from the Law of Development, issues of the subaltern and of class qua surplus still remain hidden within the postmodern symbolic order of development.

The usual distinction between modern and postmodern subjectivities regarding their dis/belief in Development supports the assumption that postmodern subjectivity is subverting Development. However, while there are areas of substantial difference both within and between these two subjectivities, a perspective offered by psychoanalysis and Marxism suggests that postmodern perverts share with their modern counterparts an oft-unrecognized common ground: they are still caught in a closed loop of repetitive search for social harmony and that search provides conditions of existence for Development. Contrary to his open disavowals, the postmodern pervert unconsciously supports Development. This unconscious support mirrors that of a modern subject who

consciously supports but unconsciously resists it. The postmodern power/knowledge in combination with narcissistic enjoyment forces the postmodern pervert to repeat the vicious cycle of "intersubjective dialectics of desire" in which he searches endlessly for social harmony. This postmodern pervert repeats this cycle by avoiding the problematic of how he is ideologically interpellated and how he relates to his own surplus. The postmodern pervert, thus, provides conditions of existence for the Development he claims to reject. The continued presence of Development, common to modern and postmodern subjectivities, constrains our ability to realize one of the goals of the post-development project: to disrupt conditions of existence for Development.

One task for an analyst, in this case critic, is neither to help hysterical subjects, be they development experts, recipients or critics, to fit back into the existing symbolic order supported by Development nor to allow perverts to feel good about themselves, but continuously to enable them to confront how their desires are articulated within the power/knowledge of development. Thus, it is not enough to argue that if we take, for example, cultural ideology of gender (Rankin, 2001) or involvement of men (Leach & Sitaram, 2002), into our theorization and practice, we can achieve better, sustainable Development. I am not arguing that these issues are unimportant. What I am arguing here is that even if we integrate these issues into our analyses and practices, other equally fundamental issues will always come up. An analyst in the development discourse will critically acknowledge the truth of the masculine fantasy of Development: it is impossible to develop all people on the terms specified by any singular Law of Development. There will always be at least one constitutive exception, a subaltern, who resists symbolization, and there is no one group that is completely developed. Or to put it differently the Developed, like the subaltern, is a constitutive exception, one who does not exist, one who

can only ex-ist in the form of antagonisms within the symbolic order of development. To put it succinctly, Development (with a capital D) does not exist. The conclusion that Development does not exist does not compel us to disengage from the development discourse. On the contrary, we, as phenomenological figures, can only bring transformation by working and reworking through discourse while we critically acknowledge the real. With critical acknowledgement of the real, the task of the analyst is to identify what has been silenced in the development discourse, to make a social link between what has been silenced in the discourse, the subjects and the master-signifier(s) of Development. Their role is not to move away from Development but to help the subjects to continuously confront and disrupt their intersubjective dialectical relationships with any Development.

Preliminary Thoughts On A New Approach to Post-Development

Within the psychoanalytic perspective used in this paper the persistent inability of modern and postmodern subjects of development to recognize that their fantasies must, ultimately, fail is understandable. That recognition and acceptance would expose these subjects to the possibility of a traumatic encounter with the real/antagonism: an encounter which would deprive them of enjoyment and destroy their subject positions within Development. In order to avoid this trauma, modern and postmodern subjects of development unconsciously cover over their internal negativity by pursuing and enjoying the pursuit of those activities that indefinitely defer confrontation with the real/antagonism. One task of today's critic/analyst is to recognize the commonalities that link modern and postmodern subjectivities. Failing to recognize their common foundation limits critics' ability to see how both of these subjectivities secure conditions of existence for Development.

Lacan's four discourses offer four different subject positions within the symbolic order of development. These allow us to consider the role of the real in a manner that is impossible in current debates. Through my examination of women's empowerment via microfinance through the lens provided by Lacan's four discourses and anti-essentialist Marxist theory I have attempted to offer an example of how we can open up a new space to theorize a different politics that may enable critics to continuously wither away any masculine fantasy of Development.

How can acknowledgement of the real be politically productive? Including the real in our theorization makes it impossible to present as total any essentialism or determinism. With this acknowledgement critics cannot simply argue in forms analogous to that A, inclusions of men, will absolutely bring B, more sustainable Development. This critical acknowledgement of the real, I argue, forces us to recognize the Other's knowledge and desire with a degree of seriousness that is impossible within current discourses. It also denaturalizes our neurotic attempts to governmentalize the field by endlessly elaborating new theories and strategies in our quest for an impossible Development. The strategy used to destabilize the circuit through which the unconscious psychic investment in the search for social harmony (from which subjects of development, employed and otherwise, now derive considerable enjoyment) is to identify symptoms of this circuit. These symptoms can be found in the excessive demands of the Master, the endless elaboration of theories and technologies, and the persistent exclusions, such as the subaltern and class qua surplus, that the subjects of development perpetuate unconsciously and whose effect is to prolong their enjoyment. This act of identifying and denaturalizing symptoms may encourage subjects to confront how they/we are differently intersubjectified with Development transnationally. And this confrontation, in turn, may

offer possibilities to disrupt our intersubjective dialectical relationships with Development and to produce terrains within which we may form radically different relationships to our fantasies of development.

One risk in this strategy is that we may fetishize, for example, class or the subaltern. These concepts may be taken up in current circuits as part of our objective knowledge. Such a move would only repeat the cycle of inadequately patching inconsistencies through practices that produce enjoyment and secure conditions of existence for yet another Law of Development (e.g., Communism). Thus, I suggest that we should have fidelity neither to the Developed nor the Underdeveloped (i.e., Third World women), but to antagonisms. By this, rather than having fidelity within a social fantasy, we should have fidelity to the recognition that all social fantasies are necessarily incomplete, and that they necessarily have at their heart antagonisms.

This theorization enables the critics, who are also the subjects within the symbolic order of development, to fantasize development differently: in contrast to a masculine fantasy, in which all should be included into the capitalist symbolic order, a fantasy structure in which we are constantly troubled by an endless progression of constitutive exceptions, we can move to a feminine fantasy. In this feminine fantasy structure no one remains without (access to) a development that is recognized to be heterogeneous, radically contingent and full of inconsistencies and within which no one group's fantasy aspires to or realizes the status of hegemony. Thus, no one should unequivocally be or indefinitely remain either the Developed or the subaltern.

What might this vision of heterogeneous, radically contingent and inconsistent development look like? Chakrabarti and Cullenberg (2003) give us a vision to struggle with. They claimed that development is conditioned not only by "ending exploitation,"

but also by "providing a 'fair' distribution" (p. 201) in order "to meet the social needs of human society" (p. 221). Their notion of the dual conditions raise critical questions regarding the struggle over "social surplus," that is "[s]urplus over and above the production surplus" (p. 220): "how this social surplus is to be generated, under what conditions, and who will get what portion of the surplus" (p.221). These questions would suggest that there is no single way to do development. It would enable radically heterogeneous and inconsistent ways of doing development. The critical acknowledgement of the real could allow the subjects to potentially fantasize developments without limit, thus infinity, and to potentially experience not only impossible enjoyment but also the "not whole" of *feminine enjoyment* that cannot be spoken in language (Saleel, 1998). In the space created by a feminine fantasy of development Third World women's knowledge and desire are not excluded. By attempting to expand the social bond that recognition of social surplus generates, we might be able to potentially fantasize a development (with a lower case d) without an exception from which we may derive maximally particularized enjoyment.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION:

TOWARD TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST LITERACY PRACTICES

Introduction

I identify myself as a feminist. Not only a researcher but also a teacher with a transnational consciousness. In the previous chapters I have emphasized my identity in relation to the former. In this final chapter I explore the pedagogical implications of the transnational feminist perspective I have theorized in this dissertation from my position as an educator. While teaching and learning happen in various contexts, the context in which I situate this exploration is that of a Northern university classroom. To make this exploration concrete I have chosen to develop a syllabus entitled Rethinking Women, Development and Empowerment for an upper level undergraduate seminar in a women's studies classroom.[1]

The transnational feminist perspective theorized in this dissertation is developed in relation to the work done by Mohanty. She also has explicitly discussed her pedagogy in the context of Northern university classrooms in her writing. In the following section I will first examine three pedagogical models she discusses in one of her more recent essays (2003) and next discuss points of connections and differences between her pedagogy and

[1] Development of this syllabus is not just a pedagogical exercise for this dissertation's sake. I will use this syllabus for an undergraduate junior year seminar in the academic year of 2008-2009 at St. Francis Xavier University where I have an appointment as a visiting assistant professor in Women's Studies. The students I have in mind are from the two semester senior honors capstone seminar on transnational feminist political and economic activisms taught by Professor Alexandrina Deschamps in Women's Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst in the academic year of 2005-2006, in which I was a teaching assistant. I may cross-list this course in, perhaps, the Interdisciplinary Development Studies program.

the one theorized in this dissertation. I will then present my syllabus. I will conclude this chapter (and dissertation!) with a few thoughts on future directions.

Mohanty's Feminist Solidarity Model and Its Discontents

Mohanty's project is "to decolonize knowledge and to practice anticapitalist critique" (2003, p. 7). Mohanty, who wants to enable transnational feminist solidarity across differences against global capitalism, is concerned with how to put forward this project in a Northern university classroom. In this context she theorizes an antiglobalization pedagogy that she names "the feminist solidarity or comparative feminist studies model." This model differs from what she calls "the feminist-as-tourist model" and "the feminist-as-explorer model." Let me describe this feminist solidarity model in relation to what it is not: the two models she rejected.

The feminist-as-tourist model draws on materials primarily from the global North and, in so doing, tacitly constructs the global North as the norm in relationship to a 'global,' understood as the non-Western or Third World, is examined. It represents women in the non-Western or Third World and their cultures as monolithic, static and non-contradictory while presenting women and cultures in the global North as dynamic, contradictory and constantly changing. In this model the local and the global are reproduced as discrete spaces.

The second model she rejected is the feminist-as-explorer model that has its origin in area studies. In this model both the local and the global are understood to be outside of the country where instruction is taking place (in her case the United States). According to Mohanty, this model can provide a better understanding of the subject matter, however, unless the subjects are taught in relation to one another it risks producing a culturally relativistic perspective in which each subject is constructed as a discrete space and there is

no common framework within which the range of subjects constituted can be evaluated. Further, this analysis fails to properly explore the relationships among the subjects taught and between those subjects and the country in which they appear as course content which, in this case, is the United States. She argued that it is problematic to teach these subjects without critiquing the processes of "internal racism, capitalist hegemony, colonialism, and heterosexualization" in the country where they are taught that are crucial aspects of "global domination, exploitation and resistance" (2003, p. 241).

Against these two models Mohanty advocated for a "feminist solidarity or comparative feminist studies model." This model does not essentialize women or their cultures nor does it conceive of them as discrete. Taking a comparative perspective, it claims to highlight not only historically developed specificities and differences but also commonalities that cut across those specificities and differences. Further, it examines how the local and the global co-exist and relate to each other by making "power, privilege, agency and dissent" (2003, p. 244) visible. It attempts to enable learners to identify how these oft-viewed as discrete sites and processes are distinct yet simultaneously interdependent and how they are co-implicated into those processes. In so doing, it aims to produce active citizens with a transnational consciousness who can imagine connections between each other through "mutuality, co-responsibility, and common interests" (p. 242) across differences to build "cross-national feminist solidarity and organizing against capitalism" (p. 230).

While I agree with Mohanty on many points and appreciate that her model is based on more than two decades of her feminist teaching experience in US classrooms, I am not entirely satisfied with her "feminist solidarity or comparative feminist studies

model" for reasons I discussed in chapter two and attempted to demonstrate in concrete terms in chapters three and four. Let me reiterate those points briefly.

First, while her research focus in recent years has shifted from the construction of solidarity among Third World women to that of cross-national feminist solidarity between less privileged and more privileged women (hence her theorization of "the feminist solidarity model" just discussed), she carries forward the object of struggle, capitalism, against which these newly theorized women unite. The problem here is how she represents capitalism. From an overdeterminist perspective, her methodology, and in consequence her pedagogy, is based on highly capitalocentric understanding of economy. Her racialized gender conscious historical materialist perspective enables her to articulate economic and non-economic processes, such as those around gender and race, in relation to a reified Capitalism. This Capitalism is dominating, successful and ever-growing. The representation given this Capitalism makes it very difficult to engage specificities and differences in terms of class process in any context let alone within capitalism and many of the different types of exploitation and injustices that constitute women. These specificities and differences are sacrificed in order to position a monolithic object of critique around which she can attempt to build a bigger, stronger cross-national solidarity across differences. This construction, in turn, motivates her to theorize a bigger and stronger oppositional body. In other words, the way she constructs capitalism and transnational feminist solidarity are mutually reinforcing. Capitalocentrism obscures specificities of and differences within capitalism and within the economy. The women she theorizes bear the marks of this essentialized vision.

Second, Mohanty conceives of class, gender, race and other social relations as part of power relations. This power essentialism is problematic from both anti-essentialist

Marxist and psychoanalytic perspectives. An anti-essentialist Marxist perspective attempts to differentiate economic class processes, the processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus, from political processes of power. While the operation of power as domination within exploitative and unjust distributive class processes do sometimes line up, this conjunction is not necessary. For example, those who are politically subordinated, let us say, poor Third World women who engage in 'homework,' could be collectively appropriating the surplus of their own labor within a communal class process. On the terms of an anti-essentialist Marxist analysis, these women are not being exploited within a capitalist class process. Their relationship to the surplus of their labor provides a platform from which we can theorize a nuanced transformative politics that highlights economic agency of women. This is a politics that is not available to Mohanty.

From a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective power essentialism is also problematic as it excludes the negativity, the unconscious or "antagonism"(Laclau & Mouffe, 1985), from the social field. I have pointed out that this power essentialism stems not only from her power-focused analytics but also from her deployment of "social construction of gender" as the entry point of analysis. Copjec(1994), a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminist, defined this power essentialism as historicism: "the reduction of society to its indwelling network of relations of power and knowledge" (p. 6). Mohanty's power essentialist, historicist methodology allows her to examine only what appears in the positive social relations at both subjective and ideological levels. At a subjective level, women are conceived of as historicizable within networks of power relations. This does not mean that a psychoanalytic perspective would reject historically investigating women. Rather, this perspective holds that an aspect of woman that cannot be historicized,the negativity – differently known as sexual difference or the unconscious, which divides our

subjectivity forever, is inaccessible within her historicist analysis. For example,internal psychic struggles, in which women struggle to reject their egoistic desire in order to be socially accountable, have no place. In excluding the negativity from her analysis, gender, race and other processes can only be seen as intersecting, as being pushed and pulled, around the closed totality of capitalism within an all encompassing network of power. From a psychoanalytic perspective those politics which do not take into account the negativity are thought to be doomed to fail in advance, for this omission interferes with transnational feminist political practices. For example, a politics which ignores antagonistic processes of class qua surplus would be doomed to fail insofar as this exclusion would make it difficult if not impossible to unite a diverse group of women who engage in different class processes. While seen as a natural constituency within a capitalocentric analysis, their interests may be different and perhaps mutually incompatible so there is no visible basis on which they can coalesce into a coherent anti-capitalist movement. Attending to the negativity, insofar as a psychoanalytic study renders this impossible terrain accessible, allows us to enrich the terms on which transnational feminists can theorize solidarity and resistance across differences.

Third, in addition to capitalocentrism and power essentialism or historicism, there are issues regarding the concept of epistemic privilege. By drawing on postpositivist realist epistemology, Mohanty has argued that women in and/or from the most marginalized communities have potential epistemic privilege. The knowledge based on recognition of their pre-given common interests as gendered and racialized wage laborers who occupy class positions in capitalist relations of production experience is thought of as perhaps representing reality more accurately. What concerns me here is that this is a theory, or perhaps more accurately a theorist, who acts as a knowing-subject able to determine who

is more capable of representing reality accurately. My critique of this is consistent with the postpositivist realist premise that knowledge is theoretically laden. Whose knowledge counts as 'accurate' depends on the theory used to articulate that reality. The transnational feminist approach theorized here draws on an overdeterminist perspective that recognizes the negativity of the social and understands that the knowledge produced by any women will never correspond to reality. It grants epistemic privilege neither to less privileged nor to more privileged women. Rather, it recognizes privileging a particular group as discursive and ethico-political. This is not to move away from critically engaging in the most marginalized women's experience in any way. Psychoanalysis tells us that the means by which we come to experience enjoyment depends on how we have been articulated within the networks of knowledge. Thus, critical engagement with experiences of women in marginalized communities, which fall outside of our/students' conscious, will enable us/students who do not share those experiences to recognize our/their co-implication in webs of transnational inequalities, to identify a struggle within these webs as our/their own and to cultivate our/their desire to be a good citizen with a transnational consciousness. This citizen with a transnational consciousness would come to derive enjoyment from taking greater responsibilities in transnational feminist struggles and alliances in our/their respective locations.

Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices

Like Mohanty, I want "to draw attention to what is unseen, undertheorized, and left out in the knowledge about globalization" (C. T. Mohanty, 2003, p. 230). Overdeterminist theories, namely anti-essentialist Marxist and psychoanalytic theories, have enabled me to identify capitalocentrism, power essentialism or historicism and realist epistemology in Mohanty's intervention that make it difficult to realize the political

imaginary for which she and other transnational feminist advocate. The question this chapter addresses is: what feminist pedagogy would be made possible by rejections of capitalocentrism, power essentialism and realist epistemology?

Practicing transnational feminist literacy is my working-in-progress extension to Mohanty's work. This pedagogy emerges from my study of Spivak's notion of transnational literacy, Mohanty's transnational feminist methodology, anti-essentialist Marxist theory and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as used in the studies of women, development and empowerment, and it is informed by my own experience teaching in Northern university classrooms.

First, Spivak's transnational literacy requires that individuals who are accustomed to appropriating for ourselves the position of the developed and the educated become literate in the agency of the Other. This postcolonial strategy is consistent with that of Mohanty. Spivak's transnational literacy also requires that we become literate in the contingency of the formations of capitalism. This strategy diverges from that of Mohanty and meets anti-essentialist Marxist theory. Where Mohanty focuses more on the continuities and successes of capitalism, this strategy calls attention to the "constant small failures in and interruptions to [capitalist] logic" (Spivak, 1997, p. 483).

Building on Spivak's transnational literacy, this dissertation has argued for three interrelated strategies. First, both psychoanalytic theory and anti-essentialist Marxist theory suggest a strategy of becoming literate in overdetermination. This would enable us to critically acknowledge contradictory co-constitutivity within every process and site. It, thus, presumes transnational connections. These transnational connections are discursively articulated through the concept of an entry point. An entry point is that moment chosen by a theorist for political reasons. The methodology theorized in this

dissertation produces a category of *women* as necessarily constituted in a particular site and at a specific time as its entry point. This choice does not privilege its object. Since each process and site is understood as lacking essence, such privilege is impossible. The privilege conferred by election as an entry point is understood to be discursive. Women, or more accurately, a specific and clearly delimited group of women, who are partially enmeshed in capitalist relations of production, are not thought of as capable of representing reality any more accurately than their more 'privileged' observers. Further, this approach enables us to take the negativity into account. The negativity is a constellation of processes and sites that do not and can not arise to the level of conscious recognition in social relations yet are part of the social. Acknowledging the negativity closes the possibility of coherent power essentialist, historicist approaches.

Second, following anti-essentialist Marxist Gibson-Graham (1996), this dissertation has argued that one strategy to challenge capitalist hegemony is to become literate in economic difference. This requires that we recognize class as processes of surplus production, appropriation and distribution. Class qua surplus allows us to deconstruct capitalism, oft-understood as having a fixed identity, and construct it as constituted of multiple, self-contradictory, and shifting identities that are always susceptible to and continuously undergoing change. This vision allows us to see differences within capitalism, to make visible different class processes, to explore their relations one to another, and to identify the contours of and these processes' interconnections with non-class processes. All of this makes it more difficult to produce a transnational feminist political imaginary on the model provided by Mohanty. If they engage them at all, the women of this vision suffer capitalist processes differently, they may be embedded in multiple class processes and they very well may have diverging

interests and understandings. Overlooking such specificities, thus, makes transnational feminist political imaginaries both easier to produce and equally futile. The strategy I offer here does not make our work easy in any way but it is necessary.

Third, while becoming literate in overdetermination enables us to recognize the negativity of the social, it does not enable us to attend to desire that falls in the realm of the negativity of the social. That unconscious desire does not appear in the positivity of the social does not imply that it is not worthy of attention. Far from it. Lacanian psychoanalytic theory tells us that a subject is divided into the conscious and the unconscious. What this subject egoistically desires and her interest in, for example, being among feminist allies will never coincide and this lack of coincidence will be a source of constant discomfort. Failing to attend to the negativity will produce persistent failures in transnational feminist political organizing across differences. In order to engage the effects of negativity we must become literate in the dynamics of the negativity which requires help from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

Transnational feminist literacy practices are made possible when the processes which produce women's subordination are recognized as "scattered" in diverse practices, discourses and institutions at multiple levels and in multiple locations (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994b) rather than coherent, monolithic and hierarchical as in Mohanty's object of struggle, Capitalism. Also, the transnational feminist approach theorized in this dissertation encourages teachers, students, and experts in development not to move away from their often justly critiqued practice, but to engage in that development differently. It offers a methodology that motivates a diverse group of women across borders to partially identify themselves with a common transnational feminist political imaginary that

challenges processes that produce their/our subordination grounded in a particular respective site.

In the next section I explore the pedagogical implications of the methodology theorized in this dissertation through the development of a syllabus.

Syllabus: Rethinking Women, Development and Empowerment

In this section, I will first present the course description and course objectives. Next, I will discuss my rationale for choosing particular topics and readings followed by discussions on requirements to meet the course objectives. After a list of required readings, I will summarize the course topics and readings in the form of a course calendar.

Course Description

This course investigates relationships among women, development and empowerment from a transnational feminist perspective. It is divided into three parts. In the first part, historically situating our perspectives in the context of feminism, colonialism, nationalism and imperialism, we compare and contrast different approaches to the study of women's economic empowerment with a special focus on essentialisms in the categories of women and economy. At the end of the first part, we begin to reflect on how we are co-implicated in transnational processes. In the second part, we theorize transnational feminist perspectives and situate ourselves in these transnational processes. By critically examining a wide range of sites of transnational feminist engagements we explore alternative feminist transformative practices that recognize both women's agency and transnational inequalities toward a construction of transnational feminist praxis that may challenge processes that produce women's subordination. The purpose of this exercise is to allow us to support collaborative efforts that bridge the efforts of women

transnationally. In the third part, students present their own final projects in which they examine the linkage between the local and the global struggles from their respective social locations and we collectively rethink what constitutes women's empowerment.

Course Objectives

- To begin to develop historically situated transnational feminist perspectives, visions and strategies.
- To become familiar with and critical of different approaches to study women's empowerment.
- To become aware of how you/we are co-implicated into transnational processes.
- To become familiar with a range of sites and subjects contested in the intersections of transnational feminist, development and empowerment discourses.
- To become aware and critical of contradictory effects of any process.
- To become aware of the negativity, social antagonism, and the unconscious desire.
- To be able to identify agency in and develop openness toward the Other.
- To develop research skills in data collections, analysis and interpretation, giving oral presentation and writing research papers.

Course Topics & Readings

In order to explore the productivity of the methodology developed in this dissertation I have chosen a range of sites other than those engaged in this dissertation. Grounded on that methodology, I have chosen readings that illuminate agency in the Other throughout this syllabus. These materials will help students to develop the sensitivities necessary for them to become literate in the agency of and to be open toward the Other. While I will be discussing these materials in classrooms I will pay attention to

interruptions and unexpected openings. I will maintain a teaching journal of, for example, activities used, questions raised, answers to the questions, and what did (not) work. I will revisit this teaching journal at the end of the semester at which time I will reflect on the implications of the methodology. An online blog and one-on-one advising are used to facilitate students' learning outside of the classroom.

PART I: Introduction, Historical Contexts, Methodology and the Politics of Location

Introduction

Week 1: Introduction & Overview

On the first day of classes, students will be asked to identify what constitutes women's empowerment: What is empowerment?; What is power?; Who are the women subjects of empowerment?; What is development?; What development facilitates women's empowerment?; Where have you learned to identify these concepts in relation to women, development and/or empowerment in a particular way?; What is your role in women's empowerment? Students will jot down each of the meanings they come up with on an index card and we will collectively sort all meanings on the board in order to map patterns in their responses. I will attempt to problematize students' constructions of these concepts by drawing on the transnational feminist perspective theorized in this dissertation. We will use these questions throughout the semester to see how our understandings of these concepts transform during the course of the semester.

Historical Contexts

For the next week and a half we will situate our perspectives on women, development and empowerment historically in the context of feminism, colonialism, nationalism and imperialism not only in terms of (or in relation to) the global South but

also in terms of (or in relation to) Canada. We begin to examine how global restructuring produces effects, which are different yet similar and contradictory simultaneously, on women in the global South and Canada. We will highlight the relationality of spaces often viewed as discrete and the agency of women without losing sight of issues of race and nation.

Week 2.1: Feminism, Colonialism, Nationalism & Imperialism

We will read Mohanty (1991a) and Sunseri (2000) and discuss similarities and differences in terms of effects of feminism, colonialism, nationalism and imperialism on women in the Third World and Canada. We will address issues of internal racism, colonialism and nationalism in relation to imperialism and resistance to imperialism.

Week 2.2: Global Restructuring & Women's Agency I

We will focus on global restructuring in the form of structural adjustment on particular women in the Third World and their agency.

Week 3.1: Global Restructuring & Women's Agency II

We will focus on global restructuring in the form of structural adjustment on particular women in Canada and their agency. We will discuss similarities and differences of the effects experienced by women both in the Third World and in Canada.

Methodology

Keeping in mind the historical contexts, for the next two weeks, we will compare and contrast different approaches to the study of women, development and empowerment with a special focus on essentialisms in the categories of women and economy and how empowerment is articulated in relation to these categories. While the syllabi on transnational feminist studies I reviewed do not include a section on methodology in most cases, I include this section for students to become conscious of

different approaches, their implications for political actions and possibly their relationality. Students will begin to develop a transnational feminist perspective, which is historically situated in their respective locations by evaluating the different approaches, analyses and their implications based on a work-in-progress set of criteria we develop.

Week 3.2: "Original" vs "Official" Empowerment Approaches

We will read the last chapter from *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions* by Sen and Grown (1987). Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) is considered to have initiated the "empowerment approach" which is widely known today in the field of international development. We juxtapose this approach with a so-called 'official' empowerment approach articulated by the World Bank.

Week 4.1: Imperial Feminist Approach and Its Critiques

We will read Mohanty (1991b) where she critiqued imperial feminist approaches to the study of "Third World" women and development by western feminists. This particular reading is influential in the field of women and development as well as Third World and transnational feminist studies and it will enable us to compare and contrast the basic contours of an imperial feminist approach and a Third World feminist approach.

Week 4.2: Transnational Feminist Approaches I

I have chosen the introduction from Alexander and Mohanty's edited book (1997) as it will allow us to identify one transnational feminist approach that grew out of the Third World feminist tradition. We will compare and contrast Third World and transnational feminist approaches and examine how Alexander and Mohanty articulate women's empowerment. Unless students are overwhelmed by the amount of reading, I will require students to read Grewal and Kaplan (1994b) where they discuss "scattered

hegemonies." We will compare and contrast this transnational feminist approach with that of Alexander and Mohanty.

Week 5.1: Transnational Feminist Approaches II

We will read chapter two of this dissertation for an introduction to anti-essentialist transnational feminist approaches. Although this is the approach I advocate, I will carefully avoid giving students the impression that this is 'the' approach. What I will highlight is the importance of persistent investigations of problems that prevent us from imagining a particular politics for which we advocate. I will attempt to present this approach in comparison to that of Alexander and Mohanty (examined the class before) and examine similarities and differences between these two different transnational feminist approaches and their different implications for politics.

The Politics of Location

Week 5.2: The Politics of Location

Before moving into Part II where we will examine various sites for transnational feminist engagements, we will read articles on the politics of location written by Kaplan (1994) and Lunny (2006). These will allow students to begin to historically situate themselves in webs of transnational connections. Students will reflect on their social location throughout the rest of the course. Keeping in mind the readings and the class discussion, students will write reflection papers on their social location in relation to the transnational processes discussed in the Part II. This pedagogical exercise aims to enable students not to take an imperialist feminist approach but to develop an anti-Orientalist and anti-imperialist transnational feminist perspective that recognizes women's agency and their/our co-implication into historically situated transnational processes.

Part II: Sites of Transnational Feminist Engagements

Exploring Sites and Developing A Transnational Feminist Perspective

For the next six weeks, during which we will continue to develop and situate ourselves within transnational feminist perspectives, we will critically examine the production of the categories of women and economy in various sites of transnational feminist engagements. We will conduct their analysis through the work-in-progress set of criteria collectively developed in the Methodology section. I have chosen articles that draw on anti-essentialist Marxist perspectives to encourage students to develop a perspective that recognizes diverse class processes. In this section a student or students will facilitate some portion of each class discussion. Part of the students' task as facilitators is to bring a description and preliminary analysis of a local struggle or activism related to the sites discussed in the class. This pedagogical exercise, which re-constitutes students as teachers, aims to foster a comparative perspective and to develop research skills. In each class we will explore alternative feminist transformative practices and discuss the context specific meanings of empowerment and its applicability/non-applicability to other sites.

Week 6.1: Sweatshop & Homework

A short self-reflexive essay by Silvey (2002) draws a transnational link among students, a teacher, a university and a corporation in the context of a student-led anti-sweatshop movement. I chose this article because it is short and accessible and all of us in the classroom will be able to relate to it in different ways. Also, it will give students some ideas as to what a self-reflexive transnational feminist analysis entails so that students can use this (along with the piece by Lunny in the Politics of Location section) as an example for their final project. Borowy, Gordon and Lebans (2004) discuss a unionization of homeworkers in garment industry in Toronto. Erçel (2006) offers an anti-essentialist

Marxist critique of the sweatshop discourse. We will attempt to make these authors have conversations with each other in class.

Week 6.2: Households, Immigration & Motherwork I

Safri and Graham (2008) examine transnational extended families and a role of remittances in the context of economic globalization from an anti-essentialist Marxist perspective. Udell (2005) highlights the agency of Native American women via examination of their "motherwork."

Week 7.1: Households, Immigration & Motherwork II

A short article on the "Nanny Chain" by Hochschild (2000) raises questions about work of mothers in a different way from those by Udell (2005). We will discuss Gibson, Law and McKay (2001) on diverse economic activities Filipina migrant domestic laborers engage in both their home county and overseas in conversation with Bakan and Stasiulis (1996) (we will have read this in the Historical Contexts section) and examine the productivity of the anti-essentialist Marxist class analysis deployed by them.

Week 7.2: Environment Protest & A Class Politics of Enterprise

We will read Kaplan (2001) who examined three different cases where mothers successfully made protests against states and capitalist enterprises in relation to the Native American women's "motherwork" discussed in Udell (2005). Gibson-Graham and O'Neill (2001) bring an anti-essentialist Marxist perspective that highlights struggles over class via processes of surplus into environmental protest against a capitalist enterprise. We will bring the environmental movements discussed in Kaplan and Gibson-Graham and O'Neill into conversation with each other.

Week 8.1: Land Struggles & Land Trusts

To understanding struggles over land in relation to women, economy and empowerment we will read Jaimes Guerrero (1997) who explores native women's land struggles in the context of the US (post)colonial state and Williamson, Imbroscio and Alperovitz (2003) who offer "land trusts" as a strategy to strengthen place-based community economies.

Week 8.2: Tourism & Sex Work

Cabezas (2005) examines the appropriation of human rights discourse by female sex workers in the Caribbean region and in so doing highlights their agency. van der Veen (2000) offers an anti-essentialist Marxist analysis of the sex industry.

Week 9.1: Microfinance & Transnational Dialectics of Desire

We will read Chapter 4 from this dissertation and examine transnational dialectics of desire that support "Development" via microfinance. This is the only article in this syllabus that explicitly draws on Lacanian psychoanalysis and highlights one role of unconscious desire. We will investigate what exposition of unconscious desire enables us to rethink women, development and empowerment. Part of the class discussion will revolve around its applicability to other sites we discuss in this course.

Week 9.2: Classing and Organizing the Self-Employed Women

The frequency of self-employment among poor women has been increasing due partly to the availability of microfinance to these women. Self-Employed Women's Association, known as SEWA, is widely considered a representative organization that exemplifies transnational feminist praxis. We will read Jhabvala (1994) along with Hotch (2000) to learn practices of organizing self-employed women.

Week 10.1: Cooperatives

Although I did not discuss cooperativism in relation to women's empowerment in my dissertation, the university where I will teach this course is located in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada where a cooperative movement once flourished. Students will do a web search on this movement for this class to situate themselves in that historical context. We will read Gibson-Graham (2003b) for an exploration of cooperatives from an anti-essentialist Marxist perspective and examine their possibilities in relation to women's economic empowerment.

Week 10.2: Building Community Economies

Gibson-Graham (2006) gives existing examples of "community economies." We will explore how this notion of "community economies" enables us to imagine our empowerment within the economy we engage in our daily lives in a new way.

Week 11.1: Enabling a Transnational (Feminist) Community via Social Surplus

We will explore possibilities of "social surplus" offered by Chakrabarti and Cullenberg (2003) for transnational feminist politics.

Week 11.2: International Institutions, Funding and Organizing

Ford-Smith (1997) demonstrates limits and possibilities of organizing locally grounded movements with financial assistance from international institutions. We will discuss creative strategies deployed as well as antagonisms faced by these movements.

Part III: Moving Forward

In this final part, students will present their final projects and we will collectively articulate what constitutes women's economic empowerment and our role as active citizens in a transnational world.

Week 12.1&2: Students' Presentations & Discussions

Students will take turns to present their final projects in which they will draw connections between a local activism or struggle and transnational processes discussed in the course.

Week 13.1: Rethinking Women, Economy & Empowerment

In the last day of classes we will do the initial exercise again to see how our understandings of women, economy and empowerment have transformed. We will also think about what a transnational citizenship would entail.

Requirements

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Students' active participation in discussion is crucial. This involves their participation in our online discussions.

Response Paper on Methodology (5%)

Students will compare and contrast different approaches to the study of women, economy and empowerment as discussed in the Methodology section. Reflecting on our initial discussions of the concepts of women's economic empowerment on the first day of classes, students will discuss their evaluation of weaknesses and strengths of different approaches and their thoughts on what constitutes a transnational feminist perspective on the study of women, development and empowerment and their rationale. The length of the paper should be no less than 2 and no more than 3 double-spaced pages. Students will attach a complete Works Cited page in MLA format.

Response Papers (25% - 5% each)

Students will pick five topics other than their discussion facilitation topic and write a two double-spaced page response paper on each topic. While I think it is beneficial for students to write a response paper on every topic, I do understand that this would

overwhelm them. Also, I would like students to explore one topic in depth so that they get to know one topic better and develop research skills that would help them carry on their future work. These are the reasons why I chose five as the number of response papers. Students focus their response on how they/we are co-implicated into the transnational processes discussed in the readings and how that identification with the transnational processes makes them think about women's empowerment and act. Students are encouraged to keep in mind the readings and class discussions from the Methodology and the Politics of Location sections and also to draw on other readings we read in this course. Students are not encouraged to overdo this assignment. These short response papers are opportunities for them to engage in the readings and prepare them for active class discussions before coming to class. In order to encourage cross-fertilization of thinking students are required to post their response papers on our online blog before coming to the class in which the particular topic they chose for the paper is discussed and submit a hard copy to me at the beginning of the class. The first two response papers are on the topics from the first five topics, the third and fourth papers on the topics from between the sixth and ninth topics and the last paper on either the tenth or the eleventh topic. The first two response papers should be submitted no later than Class 14, the third and fourth no later than Class 18 and the last no later than Class 20. Students will attach a complete Works Cited page to each response paper. Although these response papers will not be content-graded, they are essential parts of the course requirements.

Discussion Facilitation (10%)

In order to help students develop oral presentation and facilitation skills, they facilitate one discussion once during the semester. Students choose a topic, ideally a topic they like to explore at length, in their final paper. Students generate a set of questions and

post it on our online blog at least 24 hours before the class in which they facilitate discussions. During the course of discussions students share their preliminary findings and analysis of a local struggle or activism on the particular topic in relation to the topic(s) discussed in the required readings. Students facilitate in-class discussions in a part of the class (approximately a half an hour). This could be done in pairs depending on students' preference and availability of space (some students might prefer working with another student). Working in pairs is encouraged but not required.

Proposal for Final Project (5%)

I have found, based on my own experience, that even senior, smart students need some support to get their work done on time and that the quality of their work is improved when they prepare well in advance. Thus, this assignment is to prepare students both for their discussion facilitation and for their final paper. In addition to what students would do with a normal response paper, they will find and make a brief summary and analysis of a local struggle or activism that relates to the chosen topic(s) by drawing on the course readings. The length of the proposal should be no less than 3 double-spaced pages (excluding a Works Cited page). Students will attach a work-in-progress (not necessarily complete) Works Cited page in MLA format. Due at the beginning of the class students facilitate discussions.

Draft Final Project (5%)

Students will submit a draft final paper in week 10. This assignment is for students both to get ready for their class presentation and to get comments on their final project from me before they submit a final paper so that they have some time to expand their paper. They will attach a work-in-progress (not necessarily complete) Works Cited page in MLA format.

Class Presentation (10%)

Students will write a brief summary of their final projects (one paragraph) and post it on our class blog at least 24 hours before the class in which they present their project. Students will make a short presentation based on their final paper (approximately 10 minutes). Students who are not presenting will make constructive comments on the presentations. Use of visual materials and/or handouts are strongly encouraged. Students are required to consult with me in at least a whole week advance if they need any assistance.

Final Project (20%)

Finding a local struggle or activism related to their chosen topic(s) students will self-reflexively examine their subject formation in a web of transnational processes. Students will discuss how they come to make certain identifications with particular local/transnational processes, examine how the local and the global connect, explore how the particular identifications enable them to think and act and propose a vision and strategies for social transformation. Students are asked to keep in mind the readings from the Methodology and Politics of Location sections and the class discussions on those readings. In addition to at least three readings from this course, students are required to draw on at least one outside resource to make an analytical link among the processes discussed in the required readings, their subject formation and a local struggle/activism. Outside resources can be academic papers and books, newspaper and magazine articles and films. Students may choose to use the suggested readings when appropriate. If students want to use other than academic articles and books, they are required to consult with me first. The length of the paper should be no less than 10 and no more than 12

double-spaced pages (excluding a Works Cited page). Students' papers must have a title.

Students will attach a complete Works Cited page in MLA format.

Summary of Requirements

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Response Paper on Methodology (5%)

Response Papers (25%)

Discussion Facilitation (10%)

Proposal for Final Paper (5%)

Draft Final Paper (5%)

Class Presentation (10%)

Final Paper (20%)

Required Text

Sen, Gita, and Caren Grown. *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

Course Calendar

PART I: Introduction, Historical Contexts, Methodology & the Politics of Location

Introduction

Week 1
Class 1 — Introduction & Overview

Historical Contexts

Week 2
Class 2 — Feminism, Colonialism, Nationalism & Imperialism

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism." *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Eds. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. 1-47.

Sunseri, Lina. "Moving Beyond the Feminism versus the Nationalism Dichotomy: An Anti-Colonial Feminist Perspective on Aboriginal Liberation Struggles" *Canadian Woman Studies*, 20.2 (2000): 143-148.

Recommended:

Green, Joyce A. "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism." *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism.* Ed. Joyce A. Green. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2007. 20-32.

Stewart-Harawira, Makere. "Practicing Indigenous Feminism: Resistance to Imperialism." *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism.* Ed. Joyce A. Green. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2007. 124-39.

Sanyal, Kalyan K. "Capital, Primitive Accumulation, and the Third World: From Annihilation to Appropriation." *Rethinking Marxism* 6.3 (1993): 117-30.

Week 2 Class 3 — Global Restructuring and Women's Agency I

Sen, Gita, and Caren Grown. "Preamble," "Introduction," "Gender and Class in Development Experience," & "Systemic Crises, Reproduction Failures, and Women's Potential." *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987. 9-77.

Recommended:

Benería, Lourdes, and Shelly Feldman, eds. *Unequal Burden: Economic Crises, Persistent Poverty, and Women's Work.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1992.

Sparr, Pamela, ed. *Mortgaging Women's Lives: Feminist Critiques of Structural Adjustment.* London: Zed Books, 1994.

Bergeron, Suzanne. "Structural Adjustment and Its Discontents." *Fragments of Development: Nation, Gender, and the Space of Modernity.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004. 91-139.

Desai, Manisha. "Transnational Solidarity: Women's Agency, Structural Adjustment, and Globalization." *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics.* Eds. Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai. New York: Routledge, 2002. 15-33.

Week 3 Class 4 — Global Restructuring and Women's Agency II

Bakan, Abigail and Daiva K. Stasiulis. "Structural Adjustment, Citizenship, and Foreign Domestic Labor: The Canadian Case." *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada.* Ed. Bakker, Isabella. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 217-42.

Lero, Donna, Denise L. Whitehead, Karen Korabik and Jennifer Rooney. "Self-Employed Women: Policy Options that Promote Equality and Economic Opportunities." *Canadian Woman Studies* 23:3-4. 184-191.

Recommended:

Bakker, Isabella, ed. *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.

Elabor-Idemudia, Patience. "Challenges Confronting African Immigrant Women in the Canadian Workforce." Eds. Agnes Calliste and George Dei. *Anti-Racist Feminism: Critical Reader in Race and Gender Studies.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000. 91-110.

Methodology

Week 3 Class 5 — 'Original' Third World Women's Empowerment vs 'Official' Empowerment Approaches

Sen, Gita, and Caren Grown. "Alternative Visions, Strategies, and Methods." *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987. 78-96.

"What is Empowerment?" World Bank. <http://go.worldbank.org/84QXX1E8Q0>.

Recommended:

Batliwala, Srilatha. "The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts from Action." *Population Policies Reconsidered: Health, Empowerment, and Rights.* Eds. Gita Sen, Adrienne Germain, and Lincoln C. Chen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994. 127-138.

Kabeer, Naila. "Empowerment from Below: Learning from the Grassroots." *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought.* London; New York: Verso, 1994. 223-263.

Moser, Caroline O. N. "Towards an Emancipation Approach: the Political Agenda of Women's Organizations." *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice, and Training.* London; New York: Routledge, 1993. 190-211.

Choose A Discussion Facilitation Topic

Week 4 Class 6 — Imperial Feminist Approach and Its Critiques

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 17-42.

Bannerji, Himani, "But Who Speaks for Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms." *Thinking Through: Essays on Feminism, Marxism, and Anti-Racism.* Toronto: Women's Press, 1995. 55-95.

Recommended:

Amos, Valerie and Pratibha Parmar. "Challenging Imperial Feminism." *Feminist Review* 17 (July, 1984): 3-19.

Ong, Aihwa. "Colonialism and Modernity: Feminist Re-Presentations of Women in Non-Western Societies." *Inscriptions* 3-4 (1988): 70-93.

Lazreg, Marnia. "The Triumphant Discourse of Global Feminism: Should Other Women Be Known?" *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third Work Women Writers.* Eds. Amal Amireh and Lisa Suhair Majaj. New York; London: Garland Publishing, 2000. 29-38.

Week 4 Class 7 — Transnational Feminist Approaches I

Alexander, M. Jacqui, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Introduction: Genealogies, Legacies, Movements." *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York: Routledge, 1997b. xiii-xlii.

Recommended:

Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. "Introduction: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity." *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices.* Eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. 1-33.

Shohat, Ella. "Introduction." *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in Transnational Age.* Ed. Ella Shohat. New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass: New Museum of Contemporary Art; MIT Press, 1998. 1-63.

Week 5 Class 8 — Transnational Feminist Approaches II

Sato, Chizu. "Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices: A New Methodology for Feminist (Development) Studies." *Rethinking Women, Empowerment and Development:*

Toward Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices. Diss. University of Massachusetts, 2008.

Recommended:

Gibson-Graham, J. K. "Capitalism and Anti-essentialism: An Encounter in Contradiction." *The End of Capitalism (Ss We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy.* Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996. 24-45.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., and David Ruccio. ""After" Development: Re-Imagining Economy and Class." *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism.* Eds. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001. 158-81.

The Politics of Location

Week 5 Class 9 — The Politics of Location

Kaplan, Caren. "The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice." *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices.* Eds. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994. 137-52.

Lunny, Debbie. "Out of Canada: The Pedagogy of Transnational Feminist Activism." *Canadian Woman Studies.* 25.3-4 (2006): 85-90.

Recommended:

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Genealogies of Community, Home, and Nation." *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 124-36.

Response Paper on Different Approaches Due

PART II: SITES FOR TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ENGAGEMENTS

Week 6 Class 10 — Sweatshop & Homework

Discussion Facilitator:

Silvey, Rachel. Sweatshop and the Corporatization of the University. *Gender, Place and Culture.* 9.2 (2002): 201-7.

Borowy, Jan, Shelly Gordon, and Gayle Lebans. "Are These Clothes Clean? The Campaign for Fair Wages and Working Conditions for Homeworkers." *Feminisms and Womanisms: A Women's Studies Reader.* Eds. Althea Prince and Susan Silva-Wayne. Toronto: Women's Press, 2004. 303-15.

Erçel, Kenan. "Orientalization of Exploitation: A Class-Analytical Critique of the Sweatshop Discourse." *Rethinking Marxism.* 18.2 (2006): 289-306.

Recommended:

Web Search: Students-led Anti-Sweatshop Movements in Canada

Ng, Roxana. "Work Restructuring and Recolonizing Third World Women: An Example from the Garment Industry in Toronto." *Canadian Woman Studies* 18.1 (1998): 21-26.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Women Workers and the Politics of Solidarity." *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. 139-68.

Week 6 Class 11 — Households, Immigration & Motherwork I

Discussion Facilitator:

Safri, Maliha, and Julie Graham. "The Global Household: Immigration and Economics in Transnational Families." Unpublished essay. 2008.

Udell, Lisa J. "Revision and Resistance: The Politics of Native Women's Motherwork." *Gender Through the Prism of Difference.* Eds. Maxine Baca Zinn, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Michael A. Messner. Oxford University Press, 2005. Third Edition. 296-307.

Recommended:

Cameron, Jenny. "Throwing a Dishcloth into the Works: Troubling Theories of Domestic Labor." *Rethinking Marxism* 9.2 (1996/7): 24-44.

Rio, Cecilia Marie. "'This Job Has No End': African American Domestic Workers and Class Becoming." *Class and Its Others.* Eds. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 23-46.(Rio, 2000)

Week 7 Class 12 — Households, Immigration & Motherwork II

Discussion Facilitator:

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "The Nanny Chain." *The American Prospect.* 11.4 (2000): 32-36.

Gibson, Katherine, Lisa Law and Deirdre McKay. "Beyond Heroes and Victims: Filipina Contract Migrants, Economic Activism and Class Transformations." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 3.3 (2001). 365 – 386.

Web Search: The Immigrant Live-in Caregiver Program

Recommended:

Bakan, Abigail and Daiva K. Stasiulis. "Structural Adjustment, Citizenship, and Foreign Domestic Labor: The Canadian Case." *Rethinking Restructuring: Gender and Change in Canada.* Ed. Bakker, Isabella. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 217-42.

Elabor-Idemudia, Patience. "Challenges Confronting African Immigrant Women in the Canadian Workforce." Eds. Agnes Calliste and George Dei. *Anti-Racist Feminism: Critical Reader in Race and Gender Studies.* Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000. 91-110.

Week 7 Class 13 — Tourism & Sex Work

Discussion Facilitator:

Cabezas, Amalia Lucía. "Accidental Crossings: Tourism, Sex Work, and Women's Rights in Dominican Republic." Eds. Marguerite Waller and Sylvia Marcos. *Dialogue and Difference: Feminisms Challenge Globalization.* NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. 201-29.

van der Veen, Marjolein. 2001. "Beyond Slavery and Capitalism: Producing Class Difference in the Sex Industry." *Class and Its Others.* Eds. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 121-41.

Recommended:

Enloe, Cynthia. "On the Beach: Sexism and Tourism." *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics.* Berkeley and Los Angels: University of California Press, 1990. 19-41.

Alexander, M. Jacqui. "Erotic Autonomy as a Politics of Decolonization: Feminism, Tourism, and the Sate in the Bahamas." *Pedagogies of Crossing: Mediations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2005. 21-65.

Kempadoo, Kamala., ed. *Trafficking And Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives On Migration, Sex Work, And Human Rights*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005.

Week 8 Class 14 — Land Struggles & Land Trusts

Discussion Facilitator:

Jaimes Guerrero, Marie Anna. "Civil Rights Versus Sovereignty: Native American Women in Life and Land Struggles." *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*. Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. New York; London: Routledge, 1997. 101-21.

Williamson, Thad, David Imbroscio, and Gar Alperovitz. "Community Land Trusts and Community Agriculture." *Making a Place for Community: Local Democracy in a Global Era*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 249-62.

Recommended:

Patel, Reena. "Gender, Production and Access to Land: The Case for Female Peasants in India." *Rethinking Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/Local World*. Eds. Jane L. Parpart, Shirin M. Rai and Kathleen Staudt. New York: Routledge, 2002. 147-62.

Week 8 Class 15 — Environment Protest & A Class Politics of Enterprise

Discussion Facilitator:

Kaplan, Temma. "Uncommon Women and the Common Good: Women and Environment Protest." *Women Resist Globalization: Mobilizing for Livelihood and Rights*. Eds. Sheila Rowbotham and Stephanie Linkogle. London; New York: Zed Books, 2001. 28-45.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., and Phillip O'Neill. "Exploring a New Class Politics of the Enterprise." *Re/Presenting Class: Essays in Postmodern Marxism*. Eds. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. 56-80.

Recommended:

Sturgeon, Noël. "Ecofeminist Appropriations and Transnational Environmentalisms." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, v. 6 (1999). 255-79.

Week 9 Class 16 — Microfinance & Transnational Dialectics of Desire

Discussion Facilitator:

Sato, Chizu. "Reading Women's Empowerment via Microfinance through Lacan's Four Discourses." *Rethinking Women, Empowerment and Development: Toward Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices*. Diss. University of Massachusetts, 2008.

Recommended:

Sato, Chizu. "Literacy + Microfinance + Legal Rights = Women's Empowerment?: Beyond the Making of Citizens of 'A Dead End World'." *Rethinking Women, Empowerment and Development: Toward Transnational Feminist Literacy Practices*. Diss. University of Massachusetts, 2008.

Week 9 Class 17 — Classing and Organizing the Self-Employed Women

Discussion Facilitator:

Hotch, Janet. "Classing the Self-Employed: New Possibilities of Power and Collectivity." *Class and Its Others*. Eds. J. K. Gibson-Graham, Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000. 143-62.

Jhabvala, Renana. "Self-Employed Women's Association: Organizing Women by Struggle and Development." *Dignity and Daily Bread*. Eds. Sheila Rowbotham and Swasti Mitter. New York: Routledge, 1994. 114-38.

Recommended:

Lero, Donna, Denise L. Whitehead,, Karen Korabik and Jennifer Rooney. "Self-Employed Women: Policy Options that Promote Equality and Economic Opportunities." *Canadian Woman Studies* 23:3-4. 184-191.

Week 10 Class 18 — Cooperatives

Discussion Facilitator:

Web Search: Antigonish Movement

Gibson-Graham, J. K. "Enabling Ethical Economies: Cooperativism and Class." Critical Sociology. 29:2 (2003): 1-39.

Recommended:

Franke, Richard W. "The Mararikulam Experiment: Women-Owned Cooperatives in Kerala, India: A People's Alternative to Corporate Dominated Globalization." *GEO*. 57 (May-June, 2003). 8-11. http://www.geo.coop/archives/kerala503_p.htm

Bhowmik, Sharit and Renana Jhabvala. "Rural Women Manage Their Own Producer Co-operatives: Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)/Banaskantha Women's Association in Western India." *Speaking Out: Women's Economic Empowerment in South Asia*. Eds. Marilyn Carr, Martha Chen and Renana Jhabvala. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1996. 105-125.

Third and Fourth Response Papers Due Before This Date

Week 10 Class 19 — Building Community Economies

Gibson-Graham, J. K. "Building Community Economies." *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. 165-196.

Recommended:

Gibson-Graham, J. K. "Cultivating Subjects for a Community Economy." *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. 127-163.

Community Economies Collective. "Imagining and Enacting Noncapitalist Futures." *Socialist Review* 28.3-4 (2001): 93-135.

Visit: www.communityeconomies.org

Week 11 Class 20 — Enabling a Transnational (Feminist) Community via Social Surplus

Chakrabarti, Anjan, and Stephen Cullenberg. "Class and Need: An Alternative Political Economy of Development." *Transition and Development in India*. New York: Routledge, 2003. 197-234.

Last Response Paper Due Before This Date

Week 11 Class 21 — International Institutions, Funding and Organizing

Ford-Smith, Honor, "Ring Ding in a Tight Corner: Sistren, Collective Democracy, and

the Organization of Cultural Production." Eds. M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures.* NY: Routledge, 1997, 213-58.

Recommended:

Appadurai, Arjun. "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics." *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 21-47.

Gabriel, Christina, and Laura Macdonald. "NAFTA, Women, Organizing in Canada and Mexico: Forging a 'Feminist Internationality'." *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History.* Eds. Veronica Strong-Boag, Mona Gleason, Adele Perry. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 394-416.

Nnaemeka, Obioma. "International Conferences as Sites for Transnational Feminist Struggles: The Case of the First International Conference on Women in Africa and the African Diaspora." *Dialogue and Difference: Feminisms Challenge Globalization.* Eds. Marguerite R. Waller and Sylvia Marcos. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 53-77.

Poster, Winifred and Zakia Salime, "The Limits of Microcredit: Transnational Feminism and USAID Activities in the United States and Morocco." *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics.* Eds. Nancy A. Naples and Manisha Desai. New York: Routledge, 2002. 189-219.

Nagar, Richa, and Sawaswati Raju. "Women, NGOs and the Contradictions of Empowerment and Disempowerment: A Conversation." *Antipode* 35.1 (2003): 1-13.

Carrillo, Teresa, "Cross-Border Talk: Transnational Perspectives on Labor, Race, and Sexuality." *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age* Ed. Ella Shohat. NY: New Museum of Contemporary Art/MIT Press, 1998. 391-411.

Fonow, Mary Margaret. "Human Rights, Feminism, and Transnational Labor Solidarity." *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights.* Eds. Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp. New York: New York University, 2006. 221-42.

Draft Paper Due Before This Date

PART III: Moving Forward

Students' Presentations & Discussions

Week 12 Class 22 — Presentations & Discussions I

Week 12 Class 23 — Presentations & Discussions II

Week 13 Class 24 — Rethinking Women, Development & Empowerment

Final Paper Due

Conclusion: Future Directions

Like the project for which this dissertation advocates, this pedagogical exercise is a work-in-progress. It needs to be put into practice in a concrete material setting in order to examine the implications of the perspectives theorized here. Fortunately, I will have an

opportunity to do so next year. While teaching a course by using the syllabus developed, I will keep a teaching journal to examine the implications of this methodology.

My biggest regret in the development of this syllabus is that materials that draw on psychoanalytic theory are not well integrated. The limited materials I found on this topic in the context of transnational feminist engagements are inappropriate for students who are not familiar with psychoanalytic theory. I would like to find a way to integrate psychoanalytic theory more forcefully into the syllabus in the future. In addition, better integration of psychoanalytic theory is required not only for my teaching but also my research. Examinations of transnational feminists' desire would be an interesting area to research.

Finally, this dissertation and, in consequence, the syllabus developed here focuses on women, development and empowerment. The perspective developed in this dissertation does not allow me to argue that this chosen entry point is good, bad or exclusive, but that it may be productive. Unlike many other strategies, the selection of this entry point does not confer privilege. Rather, it allows me both to explore in depth the productivity of the entry point that I have chosen and to argue that it may also be productive to explore a diverse range of sites for transnational feminist engagement. These may be, for example, human rights, militarization, health, prison and religion. For each of these possible sites the methodology developed in this dissertation provides a structure through which they can be engaged and the explorations of these sites would, in turn, expand the methodology. This has implications for both teaching and research. At this point I am particularly interested in the discourse on human rights as it has recently been receiving substantial attention from transnational feminists. I believe that it will be

productive, timely and politically relevant for me to explore this discourse reformulating and expanding the methodology that I have developed in this dissertation.

REFERENCES

Abadzi, H. (1994). *What we know about acquisition of adult literacy : Is there hope?* Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Adams, P. (1996). *The emptiness of the image: Psychoanalysis and sexual differences.* London ; New York: Routledge.

Adams, P., & Cowie, E. (1990). *The woman in question: M/f.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Alexander, M. J. (2005). *Pedagogies of crossing : Meditations on feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred.* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Alexander, M. J., & Mohanty, C. T. (1997). Introduction: Genealogies, legacies, movements. In M. J. Alexander & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures* (pp. xiii-xlii). New York: Routledge.

Althusser, L. (1970). *For Marx.* New York: Vintage Books.

Althusser, L. (2001 [1971]). Ideology and ideological state apparatus (notes towards an investigation) (B. Brewster, Trans.). In *Lenin and philosophy, and other essays* (pp. 85-126). New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.

Amos, V., & Parmar, P. (1984). Challenging imperial feminism. *Feminist Review, 17*(July), 3-19.

Appadurai, A. (2002). Deep democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics. *Public Culture, 14*(1), 21-47.

Archer, A., & Cottingham, S. (1996). *Reflect mother manual: A new approach to adult literacy.* London, UK: ActionAid.

Ashe, J. (2000). *Women's empowerment program (WEP): A literacy and saving led option for village banking: Excerpt from the draft final report.* Cambridge: Working Capital.

Ashe, J., & Parrot, L. (2001, October). *Pact's women's empowerment program in Nepal: A savings and literacy led alternative to financial institution building.* Cambridge, MA: Institute for Sustainable Development, Heller School, Brandeis University.

Ashe, J., & Parrot, L. (n.d.). *Pact's women's empowerment program in Nepal: A savings- and literacy-led alternative to financial institution building.* Cambridge, MA: Brandeis University.

Bakan, A., & Stasiulis, D. K. (1996). Structural adjustment, citizenship, and foreign domestic labor: The Canadian case. In I. Bakker (Ed.), *Rethinking restructuring: Gender and change in Canada* (pp. 217-242). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bakker, I. (Ed.). (1996). *Rethinking restructuring : Gender and change in canada.* Toronto ; Buffalo, N.Y.: University of Toronto Press.

Ballara, M. (1992). *Women and literacy.* London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books.

Bannerji, H. (1995). *Thinking through : Essays on feminism, marxism and anti-racism.* Toronto: Women's Press.

Barton, D. (1994). *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language.* Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community.* London; New York: Routledge.

Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanič, R. (Eds.). (2000). *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context.* London; New York: Routledge.

Basu, A. (1995). Introduction. In A. Basu (Ed.), *The challenge of local feminisms : Women's movements in global perspective* (pp. 1-21). Boulder: Westview Press.

Batliwala, S. (1994). The meaning of women's empowerment: New concepts from action. In G. Sen, A. Germain & L. C. Chen (Eds.), *Population policies reconsidered: Health, empowerment, and rights.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Baynham, M. (1995). *Literacy practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts.* London; New York: Longman.

Benería, L. (1992). The Mexican debt crisis: Restructuring the economy and the household. In L. Benería & S. Feldman (Eds.), *Unequal burden* (pp. 83-104). Boulder: Westview Press.

Benería, L., & Feldman, S. (1992). *Unequal burden: Economic crises, persistent poverty, and women's work.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Bergeron, S. (2003). Challenging the World Bank's narrative of inclusion. In A. Kumar (Ed.), *World Bank literature* (pp. 157-171). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bergeron, S. (2004). *Fragments of development: Nation, gender, and the space of modernity.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bhatta, G. (2001). "Small is indeed beautiful but...": The context of microcredit strategies in nepal. *Policy Studies Journal, 29*(2), 283-295.

Bhowmik, S., & Jhabvala, R. (1996). Rural women manage their own producer co-operatives: Self employed women's association (sewa)/banaskantha women's association in western India. In M. Carr, M. Chen & R. Jhabvala (Eds.), *Speaking out: Women's economic empowerment in South Asia* (pp. 105-125). London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Biewener, C. (2001). The promise of finance: Banks and community development. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in postmodern Marxism.* Durham N.C: Duke University Press.

Bista, D. B. (1991). *Fatalism and development: Nepal's struggle for modernization.* Calcutta, India: Orient Longman.

Borowy, J., Gordon, S., & Lebans, G. (2004). Are these clothes clean?: The campaign for fair wages and working conditions for homeworkers. In A. Prince & S. Silva-Wayne (Eds.), *Feminisms and womanisms: A women's studies reader* (pp. 303-315). Toronto: Women's Press.

Boserup, E. (1970). *Woman's role in economic development.* New York,: St. Martin's Press.

Bracher, M. (1994). On the psychological and social functions of language: Lacan's theory of the four discourses. In M. Bracher, M. W. Alcorn Jr., R. J. Corthell & F. Massardoer-Kenney (Eds.), *Lacanian theory of discourse: Subject, structure, and society* (pp. 107-128). New York: New York University Press.

Brennan, T. (1989). *Between feminism and psychoanalysis.* London ; New York: Routledge.

Brigg, M. (2001a). Empowering NGOs: The microcredit movement through Foucault's notion of dispositif. *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, 26*(3), 233-259.

Brigg, M. (2001b). Post-development, Foucault and the colonisation metapher. *Third World Quarterly, 23*(3), 421-436.

Brown, W. (2001). *Politics out of history.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Bryant, R. L. (2002). Non-governmental organizations and governmentality: 'consuming' biodiversity and indigenous people in the philippines. *Political Studies, 50*, 268-292.

Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power : Theories in subjection.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Cabezas, A. L. (2005). Accidental crossings: Tourism, sex work, and women's rights in Dominican Republic. In M. Waller & S. Marcos (Eds.), *Dialogue and difference: Feminisms challenge globalization* (pp. 201-229). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Cameron, J. (1996/7). Throwing a dishcloth into the works: Troubling theories of domestic labor. *Rethinking Marxism, 9*(2), 24-44.

Cameron, J. (2000). Domesticating class: Femininity, heterosexuality, and household politics. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 47-68). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Carrillo, T. (1998). Cross-border talk: Transnational perspectives on labor, race, and sexuality. In E. Shohat (Ed.), *Talking visions: Multicultural feminism in a transnational age* (pp. 391-411). New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass: New Museum of Contemporary Art; MIT Press.

Chakrabarti, A., & Cullenberg, S. (2003). *Transition and development in India.* New York: Routledge.

Charusheela, S. (1997). *Structuralism and individualism in economic analysis: The "Contractionary devaluation debate" In development economics.* Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Cheston, S., & Khun, L. (2002). Empowering women through microfinance: Draft 7/8/02. Retrieved February 8, 2003, from www.opportunity.org/partners/resources/Empowering%20Women%20through%20Microfinance%20DRAFT.pdf

Chitraker, R., & Hodge, R. (1999). *Literacy, communication and community participation: Report of the baseline study in four forest user group areas: Dhankuta district, nepal.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Community Literacy Project Nepal.

Chowdhury, E. (2001). Research, representation and responsibility. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 4*(3), 408-414.

Community Economies Collective. (2001). Imagining and enacting noncapitalist futures. *Socialist Review, 3-4*(2001), 93-135.

Connolly, W. E. (1999). *Why I am not a secularist.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Copjec, J. (1989). Cutting up. In T. Brennan (Ed.), *Between feminism & psychoanalysis* (pp. 227-246). New York: Routledge.

Copjec, J. (1990). M/f, or not reconciled. In P. Adams & E. Cowie (Eds.), *The woman in question* (pp. 10-18). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Copjec, J. (1994). *Read my desire : Lacan against the historicists.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Copjec, J. (2002). *Imagine there's no woman: Ethics and sublimation.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Cornwall, A. (2003). Whose voices? Whose choices?: Reflection on gender and participatory development. *World Development, 31*(8), 1325-1342.

Cruikshank, B. (1999). *The will to empower : Democratic citizens and other subjects.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

DeMartino, G. (2003). Realizing class justice. *Rethinking Marxism, 15*(1), 1-31.

Desai, M. (2002). Transnational solidarity: Women's agency, structural adjustment, and globalization. In N. A. Naples & M. Desai (Eds.), *Women's activism and globalization: Linking local struggles and transnational politics* (pp. 15-33). New York: Routledge.

ECTA. (1999). *Women in business: Our group* (1st English ed. Vol. 1). Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact.

Ehlers, T. B., & Main, K. (1998). Women and the false promise of microenterprise. *Gender and Society, 12*(4), 1-13.

Elabor-Idemudia, P. (2000). Challenges confronting African immigrant women in the Canadian workforce. In A. M. Calliste, G. J. S. Dei & M. Aguiar (Eds.), *Anti-racist feminism : Critical race and gender studies* (pp. 91-110). Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood Publishing.

Elyachar, J. (2002). Empowerment money: The world bank, non-governmental organizations, and the value of culture in egypt. *Public Culture, 14*(3), 493-513.

Enloe, C. H. (1990). *Bananas, beaches & bases: Making feminist sense of international politics.* Berkeley; Los Angels: University of California Press.

Erçel, K. (2006). Orientalization of exploitation: A class-analytical critique of the sweatshop discourse. *Rethinking Marxism, 18*(2), 289-306.

Escobar, A. (1984-85). Discourse and power in development: Michele Foucault and the relevance of his work to the third world. *Alternatives, X*(1984-85), 377-400.

Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development : The making and unmaking of the third world.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Esteva, G. (1992). Development. In W. Sachs (Ed.), *The development dictionary: A guide to knowledge as power*. London, UK; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books.

Ferguson, A. (1998). Resisting the veil of privilege: Building bridge identities as an ethico-politics of global feminisms. *Hypatia, 13*(3), 95-113.

Ferguson, J., & Gupta, A. (2002). Spatializing states: Toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality. *American Ethnologist, 29*(4), 981-1002.

Fernando, J. L. (1997). Nongovernmental organizations, micro-credit, and empowerment of women. *ANNALS, 554*(November), 150-177.

Fiedrich, M. (1996, December). *Literacy in circle?* (No. Working Paper Series, No. 2). London, UK: ACTIONAID.

Fink, B. (1995). *The Lacanian subject: Between language and jouissance*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Fink, B. (1999). The master signifier and the four discourses. In D. Nobus (Ed.), *Key concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis* (pp. 29-47). New York: Pantheon Books.

Fonow, M. M. (2006). Human rights, feminism, and transnational labor solidarity. In M. M. Ferree & A. M. Tripp (Eds.), *Global feminism: Transnational women's activism, organizing, and human rights* (pp. 221-242). New York: New York Univeristy.

Ford-Smith, H. (1997). Ring ding in a tight corner: Sistren, collective democracy, and the organization of cultural production. In M. J. Alexander & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures* (pp. 213-258). New York: Routledge.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality v. 1: Introduction* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1983). The subject and power. In H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault, beyond structuralism and hermeneutics* (2nd ed., pp. 208-226). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The foucault effect : Studies in governmentality : With two lectures by and an interview with michel foucault* (pp. 87-104). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1997 [1982]). Technologies of the self. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The essential works of foucault, 1954-1984: Ethics : Subjectivity and truth* (Vol. I, pp. 223-251). New York: New Press.

Foucault, M. (1997 [1984]). The ethics of the concern of the self as a practice of freedom. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984: Ethics : Subjectivity and truth* (Vol. I, pp. 281-301). New York: New Press.

Foucault, M., & Gordon, C. (Eds.). (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (1st American ed.). New York: Pantheon Books.

Fraad, H., Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (1994). *Bringing it all back home : Class, gender and power in the modern household.* London ; Boulder, CO: Pluto Press.

Franke, R. W. (2003). The Mararikulam experiment: Women-owned cooperatives in kerala, India: A people's alternative to corporate dominated globalization. *GEO, 57*(May-June), 8-11.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Herder and Herder.

Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature and difference.* New York; London: Routlege.

Gabriel, C., & Macdonald, L. (2003). Nafta, women, organizing in canada and mexico: Forging a 'feminist internationality'. In V. Strong-Boag, M. Gleason & A. Perry (Eds.), *Rethinking Canada: The promise of women's history* (pp. 394-416).

Gabriel, S. (1990). Ancients: A Marxian theory of self-exploitation. *Rethinking Marxism, 3*(1), 85-106.

Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses.* London [England]; New York: Falmer Press.

Gellner, D. (Ed.). (2003). *Resistance and the state: Nepalese experiences.* London: Hurst & Co.

Gibson, K., Law, L., & McKay, D. (2001). Beyond heroes and victims: Filipina contract migrants, economic activism and class transformations. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 3*(3), 365-386.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (1996). *The end of capitalism (as we knew it) : A feminist critique of political economy.* Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2003a). An ethics of the local. *Rethinking Marxism, 15*(1).

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2003b). Enabling ethical economies: Cooperativism and class. *Critical Sociology, 29*(2), 1-39.

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., & O'Neill, P. (2001). Exploring a new class politics of the enterprise. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in postmodern marxism*. Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (Eds.). (2000). *Class and its others*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (Eds.). (2001). *Re/presenting class : Essays in postmodern marxism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., & Ruccio, D. (2001). "After" Development: Re-imagining economy and class. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Re/presenting class: Essays in postmodern Marxism* (pp. 158-181). Durham N.C.: Duke University Press.

Goetz, A. M., & Gupta, R. S. (1996). Who takes credit?: Gender, power, and control over loan use in rural credit programs in bangladesh. *World Development, 24*(1), 45-63.

Gordon, C. (1991). Governmental rationality: An introduction. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (Eds.), *The foucault effect : Studies in governmentality : With two lectures by and an interview with michel foucault* (pp. 1-51). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Green, J. A. (2007). Taking account of aboriginal feminism. In J. A. Green (Ed.), *Making space for indigenous feminism* (pp. 20-32). Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (1994b). Introduction: Transnational feminist practices and questions of postmodernity. In I. Grewal & C. Kaplan (Eds.), *Scattered hegemonies : Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices* (pp. 1-33). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Grewal, I., & Kaplan, C. (2001). Global identities: Theorizing transnational studies of sexuality. *GLQ, 7*(4), 663-679.

Grigg, R. (1993). Lacan's four discourses. *analysis, 4*, 33-39.

Hewitson, G. J. (1999). *Feminist economics: Interrogating the masculinity of rational economic man*. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Hochschild, A. R. (2000). The nanny chain. *The American Prospect, 11*(4), 32-36.

Hodge, R. (1997). *Social uses of literacy: A pilot study of existing literacy practices in communities of south dhading district: Using ethnographic and other qualitative approaches.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Community Literacy Project Nepal.

Hodge, R., & Hudson, K. (2000). *Literacy, communication and access to information: Report of the baseline study in dhanusha district.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Community Literacy Project Nepal.

Hotch, J. (2000). Classing the self-employed: New possibilities of power and collectivity. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 143-162). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Howarth, D. R., Norval, A. J., & Stavrakakis, Y. (2000). *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies, and social change.* Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; St. Martin's Press.

Hutt, M. (Ed.). (2003). *Himalayan people's war: Nepal's maoist rebellion.* London: Hurst & Co.

In Nepal, a novel project mixes literacy and microfinance to reach thousands. (2001). *One Country, 12*, 1, 8-13.

Jaimes Guerrero, M. A. (1997). Civil rights versus sovereignty: Native American women in life and land struggles. In M. J. Alexander & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures* (pp. 101-121). London; New York: Routledge.

Jhabvala, R. (1994). Self-employed women's association: Organizing women by struggle and development. In S. Rowbotham & S. Mitter (Eds.), *Dignity and daily bread* (pp. 114-138). New York: Routledge.

Jónasdóttir, A. G. (1988). On the concept of interest, women's interests, and the limitations of interest theory. In K. B. Jones & A. G. Jónasdóttir (Eds.), *The political interests of gender : Developing theory and research with a feminist face* (pp. 33-65). London ; Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Joshi, S. (2002). War in Nepal. *SAMAR* (Vol. 15): SAMAR.

Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities : Gender hierarchies in development thought.* London; New York: Verso.

Kabeer, N. (2001). Conflicts over credit: Re-evaluating the empowerment potential of loans to women in rural bangladesh. *World Development, 29*(1), 63-84.

Kamat, S. (2002). *Development hegemony : Ngos and the state in india.* Delhi ; New York: Oxford University Press.

Kamat, S. (2003). The NGO phenomenon and political culture in the third world. *Development, 46*(1), 88-93.

Kaplan, C. (1994). The politics of location as transnational feminist practice. In I. Grewal & C. Kaplan (Eds.), *Scattered hegemonies : Postmodernity and transnational feminist practices* (pp. 137-152). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kaplan, C., Alarcón, N., & Moallem, M. (Eds.). (1999). *Between woman and nation: Nationalisms, transnational feminisms, and the state*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Kaplan, C., & Grewal, I. (1999). Transnational feminist cultural studies: Beyond the marxism/poststructuralism/feminist divides. In C. Kaplan, N. Alarcón & M. Moallem (Eds.), *Between woman and nation: Nationalisms, transnational feminisms, and the state* (pp. 349-363). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kaplan, T. (2001). Uncommon women and the common good: Women and environment protest. In S. Rowbotham & S. Linkogle (Eds.), *Women resist globalization: Mobilizing for livelihood and rights* (pp. 28-45). London: New York: Zed Books.

Kempadoo, K., Sanghera, J., & Pattanaik, B. (2005). *Trafficking and prostitution reconsidered : New perspectives on migration, sex work, and human rights*. Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers.

Lacan, J. (1981). *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton.

Lacan, J. (1998). *On feminine sexuality : The limits of love and knowledge* (B. Fink, Trans.). New York: W.W. Norton.

Lacan, J. (2007). *The other side of psychoanalysis* (R. Grigg, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton.

Lacan, J., & Copjec, J. (1990). *Television*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso.

Lairap-Fonderson, J. (2002). The disciplinary power of micro credit: Examples from Kenya and Cameroon. In J. L. Parpart, S. M. Rai & K. Staudt (Eds.), *Rethinking empowerment: Gender and development in a global/local world* (pp. 182-198). New York: Routledge.

Lassen, C. A. (n.d.). *Nepali women's empowerment: How can it be sustained?* Vienna, VA: Lassen Associates.

Lazreg, M. (2000). The triumphant discourse of global feminism: Should other women be known? In A. Amireh & L. S. Majaj (Eds.), *Going global: The transnational reception of third world women writers* (pp. 29-38). New York; London: Garland Publishing.

Leach, F., & Sitaram, S. (2002). Microfinance and women's empowerment: A lesson from India. *Development in Practice, 12*(5), 575-588.

Lero, D., Whitehead, D. L., Korabik, K., & Rooney, J. (2004). Self-employed women: Policy options that promote equality and economic opportunities. *Canadian Woman Studies, 23*(3-4), 184-191.

Lowe, L. (1996). *Immigrant acts: On Asian American cultural politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Luintel, Y. R. (2001). Exclusion, the politics of location and women's property rights debates in Nepal: A discourse analysis of political activism. In R. R. Regmi, L. P. Uprety & B. Pokharel (Eds.), *Occasional papers in sociology & anthropology* (Vol. VII, pp. 83-100). Kathmandu, Nepal: Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.

Lunny, D. (2006). Out of Canada: The pedagogy of transnational feminist activism. *Canadian Woman Studies, 25*(3/4), 85-90.

Marx, K. (1978). On the Jewish question. In R. C. Tucker (Ed.), *The marx-engels reader* (2d ed., pp. 26-52). New York: Norton.

McMichael, P. (2000). *Development and social change: A global perspective* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Pine Forge Press.

Mies, M. (1982). *The lace makers of Narsapur: Indian housewives produce for the world market*. London; Westport, Conn.: Zed Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (1991a). Cartographies of struggle: Third world women and the politics of feminism. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (pp. 1-47). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (1991b). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (pp. 51-80). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (1992). Feminist encounters: Locating the politics of experience. In M. Barrett & A. Phillips (Eds.), *Destabilizing theory: Contemporary feminist debates* (pp. 74-92). Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (1997). Women workers and capitalist scripts: Ideologies of domination, common interests, and the politics of solidarity". In M. J. Alexander & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures* (pp. 3-29). New York: Routledge.

Mohanty, C. T. (2002). "Under western eyes" Revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 28*(2), 499-535.

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). *Feminism without borders: Decolonizing theory, practicing solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mohanty, S. P. (2000). The epistemic status of cultural identity: On beloved and the postcolonial condition In P. M. L. Moya & M. R. Hames-García (Eds.), *Reclaiming identity: Realist theory and the predicament of postmodernism* (pp. 29-66): University of California Press.

Molyneux, M. (1985). Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, state and revolution in Nicaragua. *Feminist Studies, 11*(2), 227-254.

Morgan, R. (1984). *Sisterhood is global: The international women's movement anthology* (1st ed.). Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Moser, C. O. N. (1993). *Gender planning and development: Theory, practice and training*. London ; New York: Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (1979). Hegemony and ideology in Gramsci. In C. Mouffe (Ed.), *Gramsci and Marxist theory* (pp. 168-201). London; Boston: Henley: Routledge & Kagan Paul.

Mouffe, C. (1992). Feminism, citizenship and radical democratic politics. In J. Butler & J. W. Scott (Eds.), *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 369-384). New York: Routledge.

Moya, P. M. L. (1997). Postmodernism, 'realism,' and the politics of identity: Cherríe Moraga and Chicana feminism In M. J. Alexander & C. T. Mohanty (Eds.), *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures* (pp. 125-150). New York: Routledge.

Nagar, R., & Raju, S. (2003). Women, NGOs and the contradictions of empowerment and disempowerment: A conversation. *Antipode, 35*(1), 1-13.

Ng, R. (1998). Work restructuring and recolonizing third world women: An example from the garment industry in toronto. *Canadian Woman Studies, 18*(1), 21-26.

Nnaemeka, O. (2005). International conferences as sites for transnational feminist struggles: The case of the first international conference on women in Africa and the african diaspora. In M. R. Waller & S. Marcos (Eds.), *Dialogne and difference: Feminisms challenge globalization* (pp. 53-77). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Odell, M. L. (1998, December). *Breaking the mold: Unleashing the power within, awakening the spirit, mobilizing the inner resources of rural women.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Women's Empowerment Project.

Odell, M. L. (2000, August). *An introduction to the women's empowerment program.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact/Nepal.

Ong, A. (1988). Colonialism and modernity: Feminist re-presentations of women in non-western societies. *Inscriptions, 3-4*(1988), 70-93.

Ong, A. (1994). Colonialism and modernity: Feminist re-presentations of women in non-western societies. In A. Herrmann & A. J. Stewart (Eds.), *Theorizing feminism: Parallel trends in the humanities and social sciences* (pp. 372-381). Boulder: Westview Press.

Özselçuk, C., & Madra, Y. M. (2005). Psychoanalysis and Marxism: From capitalist-all to communist non-all. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society, 10*(1), 79-97.

Pact. (1999). *Women in bnsiness: Forming our village bank* (1st English ed. Vol. 2). Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact.

Pact. (2000). *Women in business: Village bank lending* (1st English ed. Vol. 3). Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact.

Pact. (2002a). Worth: Awards & distinctions. Retrieved October 18, 2003, from http://www.pactworld.org/initiatives/worth/awards.htm

Pact. (2002b). Success stories from Nepal. Retrieved October, 18, 2003, from http://www.pactworld.org/programs/country/nepal/stories_nepal.htm

Pact/Nepal. (1999, June). *Toward a new paradigm for social and economic change: The evolution of pact's women's empowerment project* (Occasional Paper No. 3). Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact/Nepal.

Pact/Nepal. (2000, April). *Periodic evaluation of women empowerment project (wep).* Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact/Nepal.

Pact/Nepal. (2000, November). *Breaking the mold: Women's empowerment and village banking.* Kathmandu, Nepal: Pact/Nepal.

Pandey, D. R. (2000). *Nepal's failed development: Reflection on the mission and the maladies*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Nepal South Asia Center.

Patel, R. (2002). Gender, production and access to land: The case for female peasants in india. In J. L. Parpart, S. M. Rai & K. Staudt (Eds.), *Rethinking empowerment: Gender and development in a global/local world* (pp. 147-162). New York: Routledge.

Poster, W., & Salime, Z. (2002). The limits of microcredit: Transnational feminism and usaid activities in the united states and morocco. In N. A. Naples & M. Desai (Eds.), *Women's activism and globalization: Linking local struggles and transnational politics* (pp. 189-219). New York; London: Routledge.

Qudrat-I Elahi, K. (2003). Feedback. *Development in Practice, 13*(5), 570-572.

Radhakrishnan, R. (2003). *Theory in an uneven world*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Rahman, A. (1999). Micro-credit initiatives for equitable and sustainable development: Who pays? *World Development, 27*(1), 67-82.

Rankin, K. N. (1996). Planning for equity: Ethical principles from newar representations of finance. *Studies in Napali History and Society, 1*(2), 395-421.

Rankin, K. N. (2001). Governing development: Neoliberalism, microcredit, and rational economic woman. *Economy and Society, 30*(1), 18-37.

Rankin, K. N. (2002). Social capital, microfinance, and the politics of development. *Feminist Economics, 8*(1), 1-24.

Razavi, S., & Miller, C. (1995). *Gender mainstreaming: A study of efforts by the UNDP, the World Bank and the ILO to institutionalize gender issues*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute For Social Development.

Resnick, S. A., & Wolff, R. D. (1987). *Knowledge and class: A Marxian critique of political economy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rio, C. M. (2000). 'this job has no end': African american domestic workers and class becoming. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 23-46). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Robinson-Pant, A. (2000). Women and literacy: A nepal perspective. *International Journal of Educational Development, 20*(2000), 349-364.

Robinson-Pant, A. (2001). *Why eat green cucumber at the time of dying?: Exploring the link between women's literacy and development: A nepal perspective*. Hamberg: UNESCO; UIE.

Robinson-Pant, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Women, literacy and development.* London: Routledge.

Rogers, A. (1994). *Women, literacy, income generation.* Reading, UK: Education for Development.

Rogers, A. (1997). "Stop trying to understand us": Is PRA patronizing? Reading, UK.

Ruccio, D. (1991). When failure becomes success: Class and the debate over stabilization and adjustment. *World Development, 19*(10), 1315-1334.

Ruccio, D. (2003). Globalization and imperialism. *Rethinking Marxism, 15*(1), 75-94.

Safri, M. (2006). *The economics of immigration : Household and employment dynamics* Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Safri, M., & Graham, J. (2008). The global household: Immigration and economics in transnational families.

Saldanha, D., Ramdas, L., Kowligi, R., & Manimala. (2000). *The reflect approach to adult education in India: Process and policy implications.* Mumbai: TATA Institute of Social Science.

Salecl, R. (1994). *The spoils of freedom : Psychoanalysis and feminism after the fall of socialism.* London; New York: Routledge.

Salecl, R. (1998). *(Per)versions of love and hate.* London; New York: Verso.

Salecl, R. (Ed.). (2000). *Sexuation.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sanyal, K. K. (1993). Capital, primitive accumulation, and the third world: From annihilation to appropriation. *Rethinking Marxism, 6*(3), 117-130.

Sanyal, K. K. (1996/97). Postmodernism and the third world: A critical response to the radical democratic agenda. *Rethinking Marxism, 9*(1), 126-133.

Sato, C. (2004). Rethinking adult literacy: An analysis through a third world feminist perspective. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 32*(1&2), 73-89.

Sato, C. (2006). Subjectivity, enjoyment, and development: Preliminary thoughts on a new approach to postdevelopment. *Rethinking Marxism, 18*(2), 273-288.

Sato, C., Jimba, M., & Murakami, I. (2000). Adult literacy education as an entry point for community empowerment: The evolution of self-help group activities in rural Nepal. *Technology and Development, 13*(2000), 35-44.

Schereiner, M., & Woller, G. (2003). Microenterprise development programs in the United States and in the developing world. *World Development, 31*(9), 1567-1580.

Sen, G., & Grown, C. (1987). *Development, crises, and alternative visions: Third world women's perspectives.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Sen, L. (2000). Local research in community publishing and broadcasting—akash (ngo). *Community Literacies, 1,* 4-6.

Shohat, E. (1998a). Introduction. In E. Shohat (Ed.), *Talking visions: Multicultural feminism in transnational age* (pp. 1-63). New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass: New Museum of Contemporary Art; MIT Press.

Shohat, E. (Ed.). (1998b). *Talking visions: Multicultural feminism in transnational age.* New York, N.Y.; Cambridge, Mass.: New Museum of Contemporary Art; MIT Press.

Silvey, R. (2002). Sweatshop and the corporatization of the university. *Gender, Place and Culture, 9*(2), 201-207.

Silwal, A. R. (2002, August 30-September 5). Giving micro-credit where it's due. *Nepali Times.*

Sparr, P. (1994). *Mortgaging women's lives: Feminist critiques of structural adjustment.* London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books.

Spivak, G. C. (1988a). A literary representation of the subaltern: A women's text from the third world. In G. C. Spivak (Ed.), *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics* (pp. 241-268). New York: Methuen.

Spivak, G. C. (1988b). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271-313). Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1996). Diasporas old and new: Women in the transnational world. *Textual Practice, 10*(2), 245-269.

Spivak, G. C. (1997). Teaching for the times. In A. McClintock, A. Mufti & E. Shohat (Eds.), *Dangerous liaisons: Gender, nation, and postcolonial perspectives* (pp. 468-490). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1998). Cultural talks in the hot peace: Revisiting the "Global village". In P. Cheah & B. Robbins (Eds.), *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and feeling beyond the nation* (pp. 329-348). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of the vanishing present*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Spivak, G. C. (2001). A note on the new international. *Parallax, 7*(3), 12-16.

Spivak, G. C. (2003). Righting wrongs. In N. Owen (Ed.), *Human rights, human wrongs*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Stewart-Harawira, M. (2007). Practicing indigenous feminism: resistance to imperialism. In J. A. Green (Ed.), *Making space for indigenous feminism* (pp. 124-39). Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

Street, B. V. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. V. (1993). Introduction: The new literacy studies. In B. V. Street (Ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. V. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London; New York: Longman.

Street, B. V. (Ed.). (2001). *Literacy and development: Ethnographic perspectives*. London; New York: Routledge.

Stromquist, N. P. (1997). *Literacy for citizenship: Gender and grassroots dynamics in Brazil*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Stromquist, N. P. (1999). Gender and literacy development. In D. A. Wagner, R. L. Venezky & B. V. Street (Eds.), *Literacy: An international handbook* (pp. 271-276). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Sturgeon, N. (1999). Ecofeminist appropriations and transnational environmentalisms. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 6*, 255-279.

Sunseri, L. (2000). Moving beyond the feminism versus the nationalism dichotomy: An anti-colonial feminist perspective on aboriginal liberation struggles. *Canadian Woman Studies, 20*(2), 143-148.

Tabak, M. (2003). Marxian consideration on morality, justice , and rights. *Rethinking Marxism, 15*(4), 523-540.

The Asian Foundation. (1999, May). *Rights, responsibilities and advocacy: Participant's workbook*. Kathmandu: The Asian Foundation.

Thomas, G., & Shrestha, A. (1998, December). *Breaking new ground: A case study of women's empowerment program in Nepal.* Kathmandu: Women's Empowerment Program, USAID/NEPAL.

Torfing, J. (1999). *New theories of discourse: Laclau, mouffe, and zizek.* Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Triantafillou, P., & Nielsen, M. R. (2001). Policing empowerment: The making of capable subject. *History of Human Sciences, 14*(2), 63-86.

Trinh, T. M.-H. (1989). *Woman, native, other : Writing postcoloniality and feminism.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Udell, L. (2005). Revision and resistance: The politics of native women's motherwork. In M. B. Zinn, P. Hondagneu-Sotelo & M. A. Messner (Eds.), *Gender through the prism of difference* (3rd ed., pp. 296-307): Oxford University Press.

UNESCO. (2001). World declaration on education for all. Retrieved December, 13, 2003, from http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtien_declaration.shtml

United Nations Development Programme. (2003). Human development indicators 2003. Retrieved October 14, 2003, from http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicator/cty_f_NPL.html

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (2003). Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. Retrieved September 30, 2003, from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. (2008). States parties. Retrieved June 30, 2008, from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/states.htm

USAID/Nepal. (2002, December). *Girls' and women's education policy research activity*: Girls' and Women's Education, Office of Women in Development, USAID.

USAID/Nepal. (n.d.a). Key documents: Strategic plan 2001-2005. Retrieved March 12, 2003, from http://www.usaid.gov/np/key_documents9.htm#SO3

USAID/Nepal. (n.d.b). Increasing capacity. Retrieved March 12, 2003, from http://www.usaid.gov/np/history_1990.htm

van der Veen, M. (2000). Beyond slavery and capitalism: Producing class difference in the sex industry In J. K. Gibson-Graham, S. A. Resnick & R. D. Wolff (Eds.), *Class and its others* (pp. 121-141). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Wajcman, G. (2003). The hysteric's discourse. Retrieved May 2, 2003, from http://www.lacan.com/hystericdisc.htm

Watts, M. (1995). 'a new deal in emotions': Theory and practice and the crisis of development. In J. S. Crush (Ed.), *Power of development* (pp. 44-62). London; New York: Routledge.

Watts, M. (2003). Development and governmentality. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography, 24*(1), 6-34.

Williams, R. (2000). Social indicators. *Community Literacies, 1*(2), 8-12.

Williamson, T., Imbroscio, D., & Alperovitz, G. (2003). *Making a place for community: Local democracy in a global era.* New York: Routledge.

Wolff, R. (2003). World Bank/class blindness. In A. Kumar (Ed.), *World bank literature* (pp. 172-183). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

World Bank. (1991). *World development report.* New York: Oxford University Press.

World Bank. (2001). *Engendering development: Through gender equality in rights, resources, and voice.* Washington, D.C.; New York: World Bank; Oxford University Press.

Wright, E. (1999). *Speaking desires can be dangerous: The poetics of the unconscious.* Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers.

Ziai, A. (2004). The ambivalence of post-development: Between reactionary populism and radical democracy. *Third World Quarterly, 25*(6), 1045-1060.

Žižek, S. (1989). *The sublime object of ideology.* London ; New York: Verso.

Žižek, S. (1990). Beyond discourse analysis. In E. Laclau (Ed.), *In new reflections on the revolution of our time* (pp. 249-260). London: Verso.

Žižek, S. (1998). Four discourses, four subjects. In S. Žižek (Ed.), *Cogito and the unconscious* (pp. 74-113). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.